

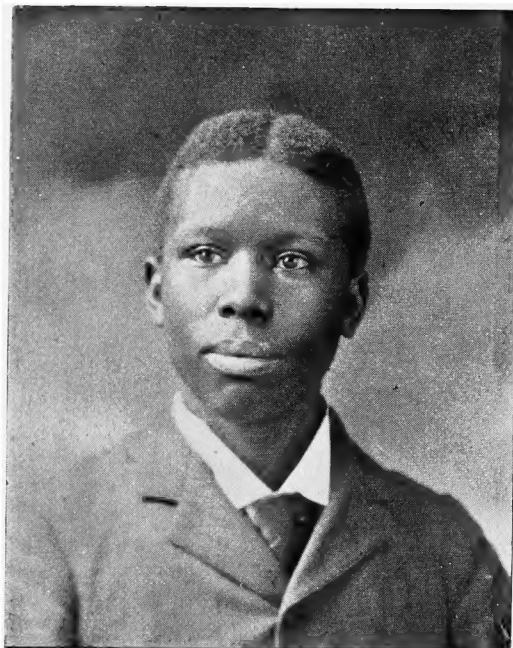
Majors

and

Minors



PAUL
LAWRENCE
DUNBAR.



Paul Lawrence Dunbar

Majors and Minors:



: : : POEMS : : :

BY

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR.

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Toledo, Ohio.

As my first faint pipings were inscribed to her, I deem
it fitting, as a further recognition of my love
and obligation, that I should
also dedicate these later
songs to

..... MY MOTHER.

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Majors

: : : : and : : : :

Minors.

Majors and Minors.

Zone.

PART I.

Ah, yes, 'tis sweet to still remember,
Though 'twere less painful to forget ;
For while my heart glows like an ember,
Mine eyes with sorrow's drops are wet.
And oh, my heart is aching yet.
It is a law of mortal pain,
That old wounds, long accounted well,
Beneath the memory's potent spell.
Will wake to life and bleed again.

So 'tis with me ; it might be better,
If I should turn to look behind,—
If I could curb my heart, and fetter
From reminiscent gaze my mind,
Or let my soul go blind—go blind !
But would I do it if I could,
Nay ! Ease at such a price were spurned,
For, since my love was once returned,
All that I suffer seemeth good.

I know, I know it is the fashion,
When love has left some heart distressed,
'To weight the air with wordful passion :
 But I am glad that in my breast
 I ever held so dear a guest.
Love does not come at every nod,
 Or every voice that calleth "hasten,"
 He seeketh out some heart to chasten,
And whips it, wailing up to God !

Love is no random road wayfarer
 Who where he may must sip his glass.
Love is the King, the Purple-wearer,
 Whose guard recks not of tree or grass
 To blaze the way that he may pass.
What if my heart be in the blast
 That heralds his triumphant way ;
 Shall I repine, shall I not say :
" Rejoice, my heart, the King has passed !"

In life, each heart holds some sad story—
 The saddest ones are never told.
I too, have dreamed of fame and glory
 And viewed the future bright with gold;
 But that is as a tale long told.
Mine eyes have lost their youthful flash,
 My cunning hand has lost its art ;
 I am not old, but in my heart,
The ember lies beneath the ash.

I loved ! Why not ? My heart was youthful,
My mind was filled with healthy thought.
He doubts not whose own self is truthful,
Doubt by dishonesty is taught ;
So loved I boldly, fearing naught.
I did not walk this lowly earth,
Mine was a newer, higher sphere
Where youth was long and life was dear.
And all save love was little worth.

Her likeness ! Would that I might limn it
As Love did with enduring art ;
Nor dust of days, nor death may dim it,
Where it lies graven on my heart,
Of this sad fabric of my life a part.
I would that I might paint her now
As I beheld her in that day,
Ere her first bloom had passed away
And left the lines upon her brow

A face serene that beaming brightly,
Disarmed the hot sun's glances bold.
A foot that kissed the ground so lightly,
He frowned in wrath and deemed her cold,
But loved her still though he was old.
A form where every maiden grace
Bloomed to perfection's richest flow'r—.
The statued pose of conscious pow'r,
Like lithe-limbed Dian's of the chase.

Beneath a brow too fair for frowning,
 Like moon-lit deeps that glass the skies
 Till all the hosts above seem drowning,
 Looked forth her steadfast hazel eyes,
 With gaze serene and purely wise.
 And over all, her tresses rare,
 Which, when with his desire grown weak,
 The Night bent down to kiss her cheek,
 Entrapped and held him captive there.

This was Ione : a spirit finer
 Ne'er burned to ash its house of clay ;
 A soul instinct with fire diviner
 Ne'er fled athwart the face of day,
 And tempted Time with earthly stay.
 Her loveliness was not alone
 Of face and form and tresses' hue ;
 For aye a pure, high soul shone through
 Her every act ; this was Ione.

PART II.

'Twas in the radiant summer weather,
 When God looked, smiling, from the sky ;
 And we went wand'ring much together
 By wood and lane, Ione and I :
 Attracted by the subtle tie
 Of common thoughts and common tastes,
 Of eyes whose vision saw the same,
 And freely granted beauty's claim,
 Where others saw but worthless wastes.

We paused to hear the far bells ringing
Across the distance, sweet and clear.
We listened to the wild bird singing
The song he meant for his mate's ear,
And deemed our chance to do so, dear.
We loved to watch the warrior Sun,
With flaming shield and flaunting crest,
Go striding down the gory West,
When Day's long fight was fought and won.

And life became a different story,
Where'er I looked, I saw new light.
Earth's self assumed a greater glory,
Mine eyes were cleared to fuller sight.
Then first I saw the need and might
Of that fair band, the singing throng,
Who gifted with the skill, divine,
Take up the threads of life, spun fine,
And weave them into soulful song.

They sung for me, whose passion pressing
My soul, found vent in song nor line.
They bore the burden of expressing
All that I felt, with art's design,
And every word of theirs was mine.
I read them to Ione, oftentimes
By hill and shore, beneath fair skies,
And she looked deeply in mine eyes,
And knew my love spoke through their rhymes.

Her life was like the stream that floweth,
And mine was like the waiting sea ;
Her love was like the flower that bloweth,
And mine was like the searching bee—
I found her sweetness all for me.
God plied him in the mint of time,
And coined for us a golden day,
And rolled it ringing down life's way
With love's sweet music in its chime.

And God unclasped the Book of Ages,
And laid it open to our sight ;
Upon the dimness of its pages,
So long consigned to rayless night,
He shed the glory of his light.
We read them well, we read them long
And ever thrilling did we see
That love ruled all humanity,—
The master passion, pure and strong.

PART III.

To-day my skies are bare and ashen,
And bend on me without a beam.
Since love is held the master-passion,
Its loss must be the pain supreme—
And grinning Fate has wrecked my dream.
But pardon, dear departed guest,
I will not rant, I will not rail ;
For good the grain must feel the flail :
There are, whom love has never blessed.

I had and have a younger brother,
One whom I loved and love to-day
As never fond and doting mother
Adored the babe who found its way
From Heavenly scenes into her day.
Oh, he was full of youth's new wine—
A man on life's ascending slope,
Flushed with ambition, full of hope ;
And every wish of his was mine.

A kingly youth ; the way before him
Was thronged with victories to be won ;
So joyous, too, the heavens o'er him
Were bright with an unchanging sun—
His days with rhyme were overrun.
Toil had not taught him Nature's prose,
Tears had not dimmed his brilliant eyes,
And sorrow had not made him wise ;
His life was in the budding rose.

I know not how I came to waken,
Some instinct pricked my soul to sight ;
My heart by some vague thrill was shaken.—
A thrill so true and yet so slight.
I hardly deemed I read aright.
As when a sleeper, ign'rant why,
Not knowing what mysterious hand
Has called him out of slumberland,
Starts up to find some danger nigh.

Love is a guest that comes, unbidden,
 But having come, asserts his right,
He will not be repressed nor hidden.
 And so my brother's dawning plight
 Became uncovered to my sight.
Some sound mote in his passing tone,
 Caught in the meshes of my ear ;
Some little glance, a shade too dear
 Betrayed the love he bore Ione.

What could I do ? He was my brother,
 And young, and full of hope and trust ;
I could not, dared not try to smother
 His flame, and turn his heart to dust.
I knew how oft life gives a crust
To starving men who cry for bread ;
 But he was young, so few his days,
 He had not learned the great world's ways,
Nor Disappointment's volumes read.

However fair and rich the booty,
 I could not make his loss my gain.
For love is dear, but dearer, duty,
 And here my way was clear and plain.
I saw how I could save him pain.
And so with all my day grown dim,
 That this loved brother's sun might shine,
 I joined his suit, gave over mine,
And sought Ione, to plead for him.

I found her in an eastern bower,
Where all day long the am'rous sun
Lay by to woo a timid flower.
This day his course was well nigh run.
But still with lingering art he spun
Gold fancies on the shadowed wall.
The vines waved soft and green above.
And there where one might tell his love.
I told my pangs—I told her all.

I told her all and as she hearkened,
A tear-drop fell upon her dress.
With grief her flushing brow was darkened ;
One sob that she could not repress
Betrayed the depths of her distress.
Upon her grief my sorrow fed,
And I was bowed with unliv'd years.
My heart swelled with a sea of tears.
The tears my manhood could not shed.

The world is Rome and Fate is Nero.
Disporting in the hour of doom.
God made us men ; times make the hero—
But in that awful space of gloom,
I gave no thought but sorrow's room.
All—all was dim within that bow'r,
What time the sun divorced the day :
And all the shadows, glooming gray.
Proclaimed the sadness of the hour.

She could not speak—no word was needed ;
 Her look, half strength and half despair,
Told me I had not vainly pleaded,
 That she would not ignore my prayer.
 And so, she turned and left me there.
And as she went, so passed my bliss ;
 She loved me, I could not mistake—
 But for her own and my love's sake,
Her womanhood could rise to this.

My wounded heart fled swift to cover,
 And life at times seemed very drear.
My brother proved an ardent lover—
 What had so young a man to fear ?
 He wed Ione within the year.
No shadow clouds her tranquil brow,
 Men speak her husband's name with pride,
 While she sits honored at his side—
She is—she must be happy now !

I doubt the course I took no longer,
 Since those I love seem satisfied.
The bond between them will grow stronger
 As they go forward, side by side ;
 Then will my pains be justified.
Their joy is mine and that is best—
 I am not totally bereft ;
 For I have still the mem'ry left—
Love stopped with me—A Royal Guest !

Frederick Douglass.

A hush is over all the teeming lists,
And there is pause, a breath-space in the strife ;
A spirit brave has passed beyond the mists
And vapors that obscure the sun of life.
And Ethiopia, with bosom torn,
Laments the passing of her noblest born.

She weeps for him a mother's burning tears—
She loved him with a mother's deepest love
He was her champion thro' direful years,
And held her weal all other ends above.
When Bondage held her bleeding in the dust,
He raised her up and whispered, "Hope and Trust."

For her his voice, a fearless clarion, rung
That broke in warning on the ears of men ;
For her the strong bow of his pow'r he strung
And sent his arrows to the very den
Where grim Oppression held his bloody place
And gloated o'er the mis'ries of a race.

And he was no soft-tongued apologist ;
He spoke straight-forward, fearlessly uncowed ;
The sunlight of his truth dispelled the mist
And set in bold relief each dark-hued cloud ;
To sin and crime he gave their proper hue,
And hurled at evil what was evil's due.

Thro' good and ill report he cleaved his way
Right onward, with his face set toward the heights,
Nor feared to face the foeman's dread array—
The lash of scorn, the sting of petty spites.
He dared the lightning in the lightning's track,
And answered thunder with his thunder back.

When men maligned him and their torrent wrath
In furious imprecations o'er him broke,
He kept his counsel as he kept his path ;
'Twas for his race, not for himself, he spoke.
He knew the import of his Master's call
And felt himself too mighty to be small.

No miser in the good he held was he—
His kindness followed his horizon's rim.
His heart, his talents and his hands were free
To all who truly needed aught of him.
Where poverty and ignorance were rife,
He gave his bounty as he gave his life.

The place and cause that first aroused his might
Still proved its pow'r until his latest day.
In Freedom's lists and for the aid of Right
Still in the foremost rank he waged the fray ;
Wrong lived ; His occupation was not gone.
He died in action with his armor on !

We weep for him, but we have touched his hand,
And felt the magic of his presence nigh,
The current that he sent thro' out the land,
The kindling spirit of his battle-cry

O'er all that holds us we shall triumph yet
And place our banner where his hopes were set !

Oh, Douglass, thou hast passed beyond the shore,
But still thy voice is ringing o'er the gale !
Thou 'st taught thy race how high her hopes may soar
And bade her seek the heights, nor faint, nor fail.
She will not fail, she heeds thy stirring cry,
She knows thy guardian spirit will be nigh,
And rising from beneath the chast'ning rod,
She stretches out her bleeding hands to God !

The Change Has Come.

The change has come and Helen sleeps—
Not sleeps ; but wakes to greater deeps
Of wisdom, glory, truth and light,
That ever blessed her seeking sight,
In this low, long, lethargic night,
Worn out with strife,
Which men call life.

The change has come, and who would say ?
“ I would it were not come to-day.”
What were the respite till to-morrow—
Postponement of a certain sorrow,
From which each passing day would borrow ?
Let grief be dumb,
The change has come.

A Madrigal.

Dream days of fond delight and hours,
As rosy-hued as dawn, are mine.
Love's drowsy wine,
Brewed from the heart of Passion flowers,
Flows warmly o'er my lips
And save thee, all the world is in eclipse.

There were no light if thou wert not ;
The sun would be too sad too shine,
And all the line
Of hours from dawn would be a blot;
And Night would haunt the skies,
An unlaid ghost with staring dark-ringed eyes.

Oh, love if thou wert not my love,
And I perchance not thine—what then ?
Could gift of men
Or favor of the God above,
Plant ought in this bare heart
Or teach this tongue the singer's soulful art ?

Ah, no ! 'Tis love, and love alone
That spurs my soul so surely on ;
Turns night to dawn,
And thorns to roses fairest blown ;
And winter drear to spring—
Oh were it not for love I could not sing !

We Wear the Mask.

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes—
This debt we pay to human guile ;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile
And mouth with myriad subtleties,

Why should the world be over-wise.
In counting all our tears and sighs ?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but oh great Christ, our cries
To Thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile,
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask !

The Poet and His Song.

A song is but a little thing
And yet what joy it is to sing.
In hours of toil it gives me zest,
And when at eve I long for rest ;
When cows come home along the bars,
And in the fold I hear the bell,
As Night, the shepherd, herds his stars,
I sing my song and all is well.

There are no ears to hear my lays,
No lips to lift a word of praise ;
But still with faith unfaltering,
I live and laugh and love and sing.
What matters yon unheeding throng ?

They cannot feel my spirit's spell,
Since life is sweet and love is long,
I sing my song and all is well.

My days are never days of ease,
I till my ground and prune my trees.
When ripened gold is all the plain,
I put my sickle to the grain.
I labor hard and toil and sweat,
While others dream within the dell ;
But even while my brow is wet,
I sing my song and all is well.

Sometimes the sun, unkindly hot,
My garden makes a desert spot.
Sometimes a blight upon the tree
Takes all my fruit away from me ;
And then with throes of bitter pain
Rebellious passions rise and swell ;
But—life is more than fruit or grain,
And so I sing, and all is well.

Ode to Ethiopia.

O Mother Race ! to thee I bring
This pledge of faith unwavering,
 This tribute to thy glory.

I know the pangs which thou didst feel,
When Slavery crushed thee with its heel,
 With thy dear blood all gory.

Sad days were those—ah, sad indeed !
But through the land the fruitful seed
 Of better times was growing.
The plant of freedom upward sprung,
And spread its leaves so fresh and young—
 Its blossoms now are blowing.

On every hand in this fair land,
Proud Ethiopia's swarthy children stand
 Beside their fairer neighbor ;
The forests flee before their stroke,
Their hammers ring, their forges smoke,—
 They stir in honest labor.

They tread the fields where honor calls ;
Their voices sound through senate halls
 In majesty and power.
To right they cling ; the hymns they sing
Up to the skies in beauty ring,
 And bolder grow each hour.

Be proud my Race, in mind and soul ;
Thy name is writ on Glory's scroll
 In characters of fire.

High 'mid the clouds of Fame's bright sky
Thy banner's blazoned folds now fly,
 And truth shall lift them higher.

Thou hast the right to noble pride,
Whose spotless robes were purified
 By blood's severe baptism.
Upon thy brow the cross was laid,
And labor's painful sweat-beads made
 A consecrating chrism.

No other race, or white or black,
When bound as thou wert, to the rack,
 So seldom stooped to grieving ;
No other race, when free again,
Forgot the past and proved them men
 So noble in forgiving.

Go on and up ! Our souls and eyes
Shall follow thy continuous rise ;
 Our ears shall list thy story
From bards who from thy root shall spring,
And proudly tune their lyres to sing
 Of Ethiopia's glory.

A Drowsy Day.

The air is dark, the sky is gray,
The misty shadows come and go,
And here within my dusky room
Each chair looks ghostly in the gloom.
Outside the rain falls cold and slow—
Half-stinging drops, half-blinding spray.

Each slightest sound is magnified,
For drowsy quiet holds her reign ;
The burnt stick in the fireplace breaks,
The nodding cat with start awakes,
And then to sleep drops off again,
Unheeding Towser at her side.

I look far out across the lawn,
Where huddled stand the silly sheep ;
My work lies idle at my hands,
My thoughts fly out like scattered strands
Of thread, and on the verge of sleep—
Still half awake—I dream and yawn.

What spirits rise before my eyes !
How various of kind and form !
Sweet memories of days long past,
The dreams of youth that could not last,
Each smiling calm, each raging storm,
That swept across my early skies.

Half seen, the bare, gaunt-fingered boughs
Before my window sweep and sway,
And chafe in tortures of unrest.
My chin sinks down upon my breast ;
I cannot work on such a day,
But only sit and dream and drowse.

The Sparrow.

A little bird, with plumage brown,
Beside my window flutters down,
A moment chirps its little strain,
Then taps upon my window pane,
And chirps again, and hops along,
To call my notice to its song ;
But I work on, nor heed its lay,
Till, in neglect, it flies away.

So birds of peace and hope and love
Come fluttering earthward from above,
To settle on life's window sills,
And ease our load of earthly ills ;
But we, in traffic's rush and din
Too deep engaged to let them in,
With deadened heart and sense plod on,
Nor know our loss till they are gone.

Sunset.

The river sleeps beneath the sky,
And clasps the shadows to its breast ;
The crescent moon shines dim on high ;
And in the lately radiant west
The gold is fading into gray
Now stills the lark his festive lay
And mourns with me the dying day,—

While in the south the first faint star
Lifts to the night its silver face,
And twinkles to the moon afar
Across the heaven's graying space ;
Low murmurs reach me from the town,
As Day puts on her somber crown,
And shakes her mantle darkly down.

Columbian Ode.

I

Four hundred years ago a tangled waste
Lay sleeping on the west Atlantic side ;
Their devious ways the Old World's millions traced
Content, and loved, and labored, dared and died,
While students still believed the charts they conned,
And reveled in their thriftless ignorance,
Nor dreamed of other lands that lay beyond
Old Ocean's dense, indefinite expanse.

II

But deep within her heart old Nature knew
That she had once arrayed, at Earth's behest,
Another offspring, fine and fair to view,—
The chosen suckling of the mother's breast.
The child was wrapped in vestments soft and fine,
Each fold a work of Nature's matchless art ;
The mother looked on it with love divine,
And strained the loved one closely to her heart.
And there it lay, and with the warmth grew strong
And hearty, by the salt sea breezes fanned,
Till Time with mellowing touches passed along,
And changed the infant to a mighty land.

III

But men knew naught of this, till there arose
That mighty mariner, the Genoese,
Who dared to try, in spite of fears and foes,
The unknown fortunes of unsounded seas.
O noblest of Italia's sons, thy bark
Went not alone into that shrouding night,
O dauntless darer of the rayless dark,
The world sailed with thee to eternal light.
The deer haunts that with game were crowded then
To-day are tilled and cultivated lands ;
The schoolhouse tow'rs where bruin had his den,
And where the wigwam stood the chapel stands ;
The place that nurtured men of savage mien
Now teems with men of Nature's noblest types ;
Where moved the forest-foliage banner green,
Now flutters in the breeze the stars and stripes !

The Meadow Lark.

Though the winds be dank,
And the sky be sober,
And the grieving day
In a mantle gray
Hath led her waiting maiden robe her,—
All the fields along
I can hear the song
Of the meadow lark,
As she flits and flutters,
And laughs at the thunder when it mutters.
O happy bird, of heart most gay
To sing when skies are gray !

When the clouds are full,
And the tempest master
Lets the loud winds sweep
From his bosom deep
Like heralds of some dire disaster ;
Then the heart alone,
To itself makes moan ;
And the songs come slow,
While the tears fall fleeter,
And silence than song by far seems sweeter.
Oh, few are they along the way
Who sing when skies are gray !

The Seedling.

As a quiet little seedling
Lay within its darksome bed,
To itself it fell a talking,
And this is what it said :

“ I am not so very robust,
But I’ll do the best I can ”;
And the seedling from that moment
Its work of life began.

First it pushed a little leaflet
Up into the light of day,
To examine the surroundings
And show the rest the way

The leaflet liked the prospect,
So it called its brother Stem ;
Then two other leaflets heard it,
And quickly followed them.

To be sure, the haste and hurry
Made the seedling sweat and pant ;
But almost before it knew it
It found itself a plant.

The sunshine poured upon it,
And the clouds they gave a shower ;
And the little plant kept growing
Till it found itself a flower.

Little folks, be like the seedling,
Always do the best you can ;
Every child must share life's labor
Just as well as every man.

And the sun and showers will help you
Through the lonesome, struggling hours,
Till you raise to light and beauty
Virtue's fair, unfading flowers.

Life.

A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to weep in,
A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the moans come double ;
And that is life !

A crust and a corner that love makes precious,
With the smile to warm and the tears to refresh us ;
And joy seems sweeter when cares come after,
And a moan is the finest of foils for laughter ;
And that is life !

Changing Time.

The cloud looked in at the window,
And said to the day, " Be dark ! "
And the roguish rain tapped hard on the pane
To stifle the song of the lark.

The wind sprang up in the tree tops
And shrieked with a voice of death,
But the rough-voiced breeze, that shook the trees,
Was touched with a violet's breath.

Why fades a Dream ?

Why fades a dream ?
An iridescent ray
Flecked in between the tryst
Of night and day.
Why fades a dream ?—
Of consciousness the shade
Wrought out by lack of light and made
Upon life's stream.
Why fades a dream ?

That thought may thrive,
So fades the fleshless dream ;
Lest men should learn to trust
The things that seem.
So fades a dream,
That living thought may grow
And like a waxing star-beam glow
Upon life's stream—
So fades a dream.

The Secret.

What says the wind to the waving trees ?
What says the wave to the river ?
What means the sigh in the passing breeze ?
Why do the rushes quiver ?
Have you not heard the fainting cry
Of the flowers that said “ Good bye, good bye ? ”

List how the gray dove moans and grieves
Under the woodland cover ;
List to the drift of the falling leaves,
List to the wail of the lover.
Have you not caught the message heard
Already by wave and breeze and bird ?

Come, come away to the river’s bank,
Come in the early morning ;
Come when the grass with dew is dank,
There you will find the warning—
A hint in the kiss of the quickening air
Of the secret that birds and breezes bear.

He Had His Dream.

He had his dream, and all through life
Worked up to it through toil and strife.
Afloat fore’er before his eyes,

It colored for him all his skies :
 The storm-cloud dark
 Above his barque,
The calm and listless vault of blue
Took on its hopeful hue,
Is tinctured every golden beam—
 He had his dream.

He labored hard and failed at last,
His sails too weak to bear the blast,
The raging tempests tore away
And sent his beating barque astray.
 But what cared he
 For wind or sea !
He said, “The tempest will be short,
My barque will come to port.”
He saw through every cloud a gleam—
 He had his dream.

A Creed and Not a Creed.

TO J. E. ILIFF.

I am no priest of crooks nor creeds,
For human wants and human needs
Are more to me than prophets' deeds ;
And human tears and human cares
Affect me more than human prayers.

Go, cease your wail, lugubrious saint!
You fret high Heaven with your plaint.
Is this the "Christian's joy" you paint?
Is this the Christian's boasted bliss?
Avails your faith no more than this?

Take up your arms, come out with me,
Let Heav'n alone; humanity
Needs more and Heaven less from thee.
With pity for mankind look 'round;
Help them to rise—and Heaven is found.

Beyond the Years.

I.

Beyond the years the answer lies,
Beyond where brood the grieving skies
And Night drops tears.
Where Faith rod-chastened smiles to rise
And doff its fears,
And carping Sorrow pines and dies—
Beyond the years.

II.

Beyond the years, the prayer for rest
Shall beat no more within the breast;
The darkness clears,
And Morn perched on the mountain's crest
Her form uprears—
The day that is to come is best,
Beyond the years.

III.

Beyond the years, the soul shall find
That endless peace for which it pined,
 For light appears,
And to the eyes that still were blind
 With blood and tears,
Their sight shall come all unconfined
 Beyond the years.

Dirge.

Place this bunch of mignonette
 In her cold, dead hand ;
When the golden sun is set,
 Where the poplars stand,
Bury her from sun and day,
Lay my little love away
 From my sight.

She was like a modest flower
 Blown in sunny June,
Warm as sun at noon's high hour—
 Chaster than the moon.
Ah, her day was brief and bright,
Earth has lost a star of light.
 She is dead.

Softly breathe her name to me,
Ah, I loved her so.
Gentle let your tribute be,
None may better know
Her true worth than I who weep
O'er her as she lies asleep—
Soft asleep.

Lay these lilies on her breast,
They are not more white
Than the soul of her, at rest
'Neath their petals bright.
Chant your aves soft and low,
Solemn be your tread and slow,—
She is dead.

Lay her here beneath the grass,
Cool and green and sweet,
Where the gentle brook may pass
Crooning at her feet.
Nature's bards shall come and sing,
And the fairest flowers shall spring
Where she lies.

Safe above the waters swirl,
She has crossed the bar ;
Earth has lost a precious pearl,
Heaven has gained a star,
That shall ever sing and shine,
Till it quells this grief of mine
For my love.

The Colored Soldiers.

If the muse were mine to tempt it
And my feeble voice were strong,
If my tongue were trained to measures,
I would sing a stirring song.
I would sing a song heroic
Of those noble sons of Ham,
Of the gallant colored soldiers
Who fought for Uncle Sam !

In the early days you scorned them,
And with many a flip and flout,
Said "these battles are the white man's
And the whites will fight them out."
Up the hills you fought and faltered,
In the vales you strove and bled,
While your ears still heard the thunder
Of the foes' increasing tread.

Then distress fell on the nation
And the flag was drooping low ;
Should the dust pollute your banner ?
No ! the nation shouted, No !
So when war, in savage triumph,
Spread abroad his funeral pall—
Then you called the colored soldiers,
And they answered to your call.

And like hounds unleashed and eager
For the life blood of the prey,
Sprung they forth and bore them bravely
In the thickest of the fray
And where'er the fight was hottest—
Where the bullets fastest fell,
There they pressed unblanched and fearless
At the very mouth of hell.

Ah, they rallied to the standard
To uphold it by their might,
None were stronger in the labors,
None were braver in the fight.
At Forts Donelson and Henry
On the plains of Olustee,
They were foremost in the fight
Of the battles of the free.

And at Pillow ! God have mercy
On the deeds committed there,
And the souls of those poor victims
Sent to Thee without a prayer.
Let the fullness of thy pity
O'er the hot wrought spirits sway,
Of the gallant colored soldier
Who fell fighting on that day !

Yes, the Blacks enjoy their freedom
And they won it dearly, too ;
For the life blood of their thousands
Did the southern fields bedew.

In the darkness of their bondage,
In their depths of slavery's night ;
Their muskets flashed the dawning
And they fought their way to light.

They were comrades then and brothers,
Are they more or less to-day ?
They were good to stop a bullet
And to front the fearful fray.
They were citizens and soldiers,
When rebellion raised its head ;
And the traits that made them worthy—
Ah ! those virtues are not dead.

They have shared your nightly vigils,
They have shared your daily toil ;
And their blood with yours commingling
Has made rich the Southern soil.
They have slept and marched and suffered
'Neath the same dark skies as you,
They have met as fierce a foeman
And have been as brave and true.

And their deeds shall find a record,
In the registry of Fame ;
For their blood has cleansed completely
Every blot of Slavery's shame.
So all honor and all glory
To those noble Sons of Ham—
The gallant colored soldiers,
Who fought for Uncle Sam !

Dead.

A knock is at her door, but she is weak ;
Strange dews have washed the paint streaks from her
cheeks ;
She does not rise, but ah this friend is known,
And knows that he will find her all alone.
So opens he the door, and with soft tread,
Goes straightway to the richly curtained bed.
His soft hand on her dewy head he lays.
A strange white light she gives him for his gaze.
Then, looking on the glory of her charms,
He crushes her resistless in his arms.

Stand back ! look not upon this bold embrace,
Nor view the calmness of the wanton's face,
With joy unspeakable and 'bated breath,
She keeps her last, long, liaison with death !

To the Memory of Mary Young.

God has His plans, and what if we,
With our sight be too blind to see
Their full fruition ; can not He,
Who made it, solve the mystery ?
One whom we loved has fall'n asleep,
Not died ; although her calm be deep.
Some new, unknown and strange surprise
In Heaven holds enrapt her eyes.

And can you blaine her that her gaze
Is turned away from earthly ways,
When to her eyes, God's light and love
Have giv'n the view of things above ?
A gentle spirit sweetly good,
The pearl of precious womanhood ;
Who heard the voice of duty clear,
And found her mission soon and near.

She loved all nature, flowers fair,
The warmth of sun, the kiss of air,
The birds that filled the sky with song,
The stream that laughed its way along.
Her home to her was shrine and throne,
But one love held her not alone ;
She sought out poverty and grief,
Who touched her robe and found relief.

So sped she in her Master's work,
Too busy and too brave to shirk,
When through the silence dusk and dim,
God called her and she fled to Him.
We wonder at the early call,
And tears of sorrow can but fall
For her o'er whom we spread the pall ;
But faith, sweet faith is over all.

The house is dust, the voice is dumb,
But through undying years to come,
The spark that glowed within her soul
Shall light our footsteps to the goal.

She went her way ; but oh, she trod
The path that led her straight to God.
Such lives as this put death to scorn ;
They lose our day to find God's morn.

Comparison.

The sky of brightest gray seems dark
To one whose sky was ever white.
To one who never knew a spark,
Thro' all his life, of love or light,
The grayest cloud seems over bright.

The robin sounds a beggar's note
Where one the nightingale has heard,
But he, for whom no silver throat,
Its liquid music ever stirred,
Deems robin still the sweetest bird.

By the Stream.

By the stream I dream in calm delight, and watch as
in a glass,
How the clouds like crowds of snowy-hued and white-
robed maidens pass,
And the water into ripples breaks and sparkles as it
spreads,
Like a host of armored knights with silver helmets on
their heads.

And I deem the stream an emblem fit of human life
may go,
For I find a mind may sparkle much and yet but
shallows show,
And a soul may glow with myriad lights and wondrous
mysteries,
When it only lies a dormant thing and mirrors what it
sees.

Conscience and Remorse.

“Goodbye,” I said to my conscience—
“Goodbye for aye and aye,”
And I put her hands off harshly,
And turned my face away,
And conscience smitten sorely
Returned not from that day.

But a time came when my spirit
Grew weary of its pace ;
And I cried : “Come back, my conscience,
I long to see thy face.”
But conscience cried : “I cannot,
Remorse sits in my place.

The Lover and the Moon.

A lover whom duty called over the wave,
Within himself communed: "Will my love be true
If left to herself? Had I better not sue
Some friend to watch over her, good and grave?
"But my friend might fail in my need," he said,
And I return to find love dead.
Since friendships fade like the flow'rs of June,
I will leave her in charge of the stable moon.

Then he said to the moon: "Oh dear old moon
Who for years and years from thy throne above
Hast nurtured and guarded young lovers and love,
My heart has but come to its waiting June,
And the promise time of the budding vine;
Oh guard thee well this love of mine.
And he harked him then while all was still,
And the pale moon answered and said "I will."

And he sailed in his ship o'er many seas,
And he wandered wide o'er strange far strands:
In isles of the south and in Orient lands,
Where pestilence lurks in the breath of the breeze.
But his star was high, so he braved the main,
And sailed him blithely home again;
And with joy, he bended his footsteps soon
To learn of his love from the matron moon.

She sat as of yore, in her olden place,
 Serene as death, in her silver chair.
 A white rose gleamed in her whiter hair,
And the tint of a blush was on her face.
 At sight of the youth, she sadly bowed
 And hid her face 'neath a gracious cloud.
 She faltered faint on the night's dim marge,
But, "how," spoke the youth, "have you kept your
 charge?"

The moon was sad at a trust ill-kept.
 The blush went out in her blanching cheek,
 And her voice was timid and low and weak,
As she made her plea and sighed and wept.
 "Oh another prayed and another plead
 And I couldn't resist," she answering said,
 "But love still grows in the hearts of men,
 Go forth dear youth and love again."

But he turned him away from her proffered grace.
 "Thou art false, Oh moon, as the hearts of men,
 I will not, will not love again."
And he turned sheer 'round with a soul sick face,
 To the sea, and cried: "Sea, curse the moon
 Who makes her vows and forgets so soon."
 And the awful sea with anger stirred,
 And his breast heaved hard as he lay and heard.

And ever the moon wept down in rain,
 And ever her sighs rose high in wind:

But the earth and sea were deaf and blind,
And she wept and sighed her griefs in vain.
And ever at night, when the storm is fierce,
The cries of a wraith through the thunders pierce:
And the waves strain their awful hands on high
To tear the false moon from the sky.

Ships That Pass in the Night.

Out in the sky the great dark clouds are massing,
I look far out into the pregnant night
Where I can hear a solemn booming gun
And catch the gleaming of a random light,
That tells me that the ship I seek is passing, passing.

My tearful eyes, my soul's deep hurt are glassing ;
For I would hail and check that ship of ships.
I stretch my hands imploring, cry aloud,
My voice falls dead a foot from mine own lips
And but its ghost doth reach that vessel, passing
passing.

Oh Earth, oh Sky, oh Ocean, both surpassing,
Oh heart of mine, oh soul that dreads the dark !
Is there no hope for me ? Is there no way
That I may sight and check that speeding bark,
Which out of sight and sound is passing, passing ?

Nature and Art.

TO MY FRIEND, CHARLES B. NETTLETON.

I.

The young queen Nature, ever sweet and fair,
Once on a time fell upon evil days.
From hearing oft herself discussed with praise,
There grew within her heart the longing rare
To see herself ; and every passing air
The warm desire fanned into lusty blaze.
Full oft she sought this end by devious ways,
But sought in vain, so fell she in despair.

For none within her train nor by her side
Could solve the task or give the envied boon.
So day and night, beneath the sun and moon,
She wandered to and fro unsatisfied,
Till Art came by, a blithe inventive elf,
And made a glass wherein she saw herself.

II.

Enrapt, the queen gazed on her glorious self,
Then trembling with the thrill of sudden thought,
Commanded that the skillful wight be brought
That she might dower him with lands and pelf.
Then out upon the silent sea-lapt shelf
And up the hills and on the downs they sought
Him who so well and wondrously had wrought :

And with much search found and brought home the elf,
 But he put by all gifts with sad replies
And from his lips these words flowed forth like wine :
 “ Oh, queen, I want no gift but thee,” he said.
She heard and looked on him with love-lit eyes,
Gave him her hand, low murmuring : “ I am thine,”
 And at the morrow’s dawning they were wed.

Premonition.

 Dear heart, good-night !
Nay, list awhile that sweet voice singing
 When the world is all so bright,
And the sound of song sets the heart a-ringing,
 Oh, love, it is not right—
 Not then to say, “ good-night.

 Dear heart, good-night !
The late winds in the lake weeds shiver,
 And the spray flies cold and white.
And the voice that sings gives a tell-tale quiver—
 “ Ah, yes, the world is bright,
 But dearest heart, good-night !

 Dear heart, good-night !
And do not seek to longer hold me !
 For my soul is in affright
As the fearful glooms in their pall enfold me.
 See him who sang how white
 And still, so dear, good-night.

Dear heart, good-night!
Thy hand I'll press no more forever,
And mine eyes shall lose the light :
For the great white wraith by the winding river
Shall check my steps with might.
So, dear, good-night, good-night !

Ode for Memorial Day.

Done are the toils and the wearisome marches,
Done is the summons of bugle and drum.
Softly and sweetly, the sky over-arches,
Shelt'ring a land where Rebellion is dumb.
Dark were the days of the country's derangement,
Sad were the hours when the conflict was on,
But through the gloom of fraternal estrangement,
God sent his light, and we welcome the dawn.
O'er the expanse of our mighty dominions,
Sweeping away to the uttermost parts,
Peace, the wide-flying, on untiring pinions,
Bringeth her message of joy to our hearts.

Ah, but this joy which our minds cannot measure,
What did it cost for our fathers to gain !
Bought at the price of the heart's dearest treasure,
Born out of travail and sorrow and pain.
Born in the battle where fleet Death was flying,
Slaying with saber stroke bloody and fell :
Born where the heroes and martyrs were dying,
Torn by the fury of bullet and shell.

Ah, but the day is past : silent the rattle,
And the confusion that followed the fight,
Peace to the heroes who died in the battle,
Martyrs to truth and the crowning of Right !

Out of the blood of a conflict fraternal,
Out of the dust and the dimness of death,
Burst into blossoms of glory eternal,
Flowers that startle the world with their breath.
Flowers of charity, peace and devotion
Bloom in the hearts that are empty of strife ;
Love that is boundless and broad as the ocean
Leaps into beauty and fullness of life.
So with the singing of pæans and chorals,
And with the flag flashing high in the sun,
Place on the graves of our heroes the laurels
Which their unfaltering valor has won !

The Rising of the Storm.

The lake's dark breast
Is all unrest,
It heaves with a sob and a sigh.
Like a tremulous bird,
From its slumber stirred,
The moon is a-tilt in the sky.

From the silent deep
The waters sweep,
But faint on the cold white stones,
And the wavelets fly
With a plaintive cry
O'er the old earth's bare, bleak bones.

And the spray upsprings
On its ghost-white wings
And tosses a kiss at the stars ;
While a water sprite,
In sea-pearls dight
Hums a sea hymn's solemn bars.

Far out in the night,
On the wavering sight
I see a dark hull loom :
And its light on high,
Like a Cyclop's eye
Shines out through the mist and gloom.

Now the winds well up
From the earth's deep cup
And fall on the sea and shore,
And against the pier
The waters rear
And break with a sullen roar.

Up comes the gale,
And the mist-wrought veil
Gives way to the lightning's glare.

And the cloud-drifts fall,
A sombre pall
O'er water, earth and air.

The storm-king flies,
His whip he plies
And bellows down the wind.
The lightning rash
With blinding flash
Comes pricking on behind.

Rise, waters, rise
And taunt the skies
With your swift-flitting form.
Sweep, wild winds, sweep
And tear the deep
To atoms in the storm.

And the waters leapt,
And the wild winds swept
And blew out the moon in the sky,
And I laughed with glee,
It was joy to me
As the storm went raging by !

The Wind and the Sea.

I stood by the shore at the death of day,
As the sun sank flaming red ;
And the face of the waters that spread away
Was as gray as the face of the dead.

And I heard the cry of the wanton sea
 And the moan of the wailing wind ;
For love's sweet pain in his heart had he,
 But the gray old sea had sinned.

The wind was young and the sea was old,
 But their cries went up together ;
The wind was warm and the sea was cold,
 For age makes wintry weather.

So they cried aloud and they wept amain,
 Till the sky grew dark to hear it ;
And out of its folds crept the misty rain,
 In its shroud, like a troubled spirit.

For the wind was wild with a hopeless love,
 And the sea was sad at heart
At many a crime that he wot of,
 Wherein he had played his part.

He thought of the gallant ships gone down
 By the will of his wicked waves ;
And he thought how the church-yard in the town
 Held the sea-made widows' graves.

The wild wind thought of the love he had left
 Afar in an eastern land,
And he longed, as long the much bereft,
 For the touch of her perfumed hand.

In his winding wail and his deep-heaved sigh,
His aching grief found vent ;
While the sea looked up at the bending sky
And murmured : “ I repent.”

But e'en as he spoke, a ship came by,
That bravely ploughed the main,
And a light came into the sea's green eye,
And his heart grew hard again.

Then he spoke to the wind : “ Friend, seest thou not
Yon vessel is eastward bound ?
Pray speed with it to the happy spot
Where thy loved one may be found. ”

And the wind rose up in a dear delight,
And after the good ship sped ;
But the crafty sea by his wicked might
Kept the vessel ever ahead.

Till the wind grew fierce in his despair,
And white on the brow and lip.
He tore his garments and tore his hair,
And fell on the flying ship.

And the ship went down, for a rock was there,
And the sailless sea loomed black ;
While burdened again with dole and care,
The wind came moaning back.

And still he moans from his bosom hot
Where his raging grief lies pent,
And ever when the ships come not,
The sea says : " I repent."

Passion and Love.

A maiden wept and, as a comforter,
Came one who cried, " I love thee," and he seized
Her in his arms and kissed her with hot breath,
That dried the tears upon her flaming cheeks.
While ever more his boldly blazing eye
Burned into hers ; but she uncomforted
Shrank from his arms and only wept the more.

Then one came and gazed mutely in her face
With wide and wistful eyes ; but still aloof
He held himself ; as with a reverent fear,
As one who knows some sacred presence nigh.
And as she wept he mingled tear with tear
That glad her soul like dew a dusty flow'r,—
Until she smiled, approached and touched his hand!

A Border Ballad.

Oh, I haven't got long to live, for we all
Die soon, e'en those who live longest ;
And the poorest and weakest are taking their chance
Along with the richest and strongest.
So its heigho for a glass and a song,
And a bright eye over the table,
And a dog for the hunt when the game is flush,
And the pick of a gentleman's stable.

There is Dimmock o' Dune, he was here yesternight,
But he's rotting to-day on Glen Arragh ;
'Twas the hand o' MacPherson that gave him the blow,
And the vultures shall feast on his marrow.
But its heigho for a brave old song
And a glass while we are able ;
Here's a health to death and another cup
To the bright eye over the table.

I can show a broad back and a jolly deep chest,
But who argues now on appearance ?
A blow or a thrust or a stumble at best
May send me to-day to my clearance.
Then its heigho for the things I love,
My mother 'll be soon wearing sable,
But give me my horse and my dog and my glass,
And a bright eye over the table.

3f.

If life were but a dream, my Love,
And death the waking time ;
If day had not a beam, my Love,
And night had not a rhyme ;
A barren, barren world were this
Without one saving gleam
I'd only ask that with a kiss
You'd wake me from the dream.

If dreaming were the sum of days,
And loving were the bane ;
If battling for a wreath of bays
Could sooth a heart in pain ;
I'd scorn the meed of battle's might,
All other aims above
I'd choose the human's higher right,
To suffer and to love !

A Corn-Song.

On the wide veranda white,
In the purple failing light,
Sits the master while the sun is lowly burning ;
And his dreamy thoughts are drowned
In the softly flowing sound
Of the corn-songs of the field-hands slow returning.

Oh we hoe de co'n
Since de ehly mo'n
Now de sinkin' sun
Says de day is done.

O'er the fields with heavy tread,
Light of heart and high of head—
Tho' the halting steps be labored, slow and weary ;
Still the spirits brave and strong
Find a comforter in song,
And their corn-song rises ever loud and cheery.

Song—

To the master in his seat,
Comes the burden full and sweet
Of the mellow minor music growing clearer ;
As the toilers raise the hymn,
Thro' the silence dusk and dim,
To the cabin's restful shelter drawing nearer.

Song—

And a tear is in the eye
Of the master sitting by,
As he listens to the echoes low-relying
To the music's fading calls
As it faints away and falls
Into silence, deep within the cabin dying.

Song.

Retrospection.

When you and I were young, the days
Were filled with scent of pink and rose,
And full of joy from dawn till close,
From morning's mist till evening's haze.
And when the robin sung his song
The verdant woodland ways along,
We whistled louder than he sung.
And school was joy, and work was sport
For which the hours were all too short,
When you and I were young, my boy,
When you and I were young.

When you and I were young, the woods
Brimmed bravely o'er with every joy
To charm the happy-hearted boy
The quail turned out her timid broods ;
The prickly copse, a hostess fine,
Held high black cups of harmless wine ;
And low the laden grape-vine swung
With beads of night kissed amethyst
Where buzzing lovers held their tryst,
When you and I were young, my boy,
When you and I were young.

When you and I were young, the cool
And fresh wind fanned our fevered brows
When tumbling o'er the scented mows,
Or stripping by the dimpling pool,

Sedge-fringed about its shimmering face,
Save where we'd worn an ent'ring place.

How with our shouts the calm banks rung !
How flashed the spray as we plunged in—
Pure gems that never caused a sin !

When you and I were young, my boy,
When you and I were young.

When you and I were young, we heard
All sounds of Nature with delight,
The whirr of wing in sudden flight,
The chirping of the baby-bird.

The columbine's red bells were rung ;
The locust's vested chorus sung ;
While every wind his zithern strung
To high and holy-sounding keys,
And played sonatas in the trees—

When you and I were young, my boy,
When you and I were young.

When you and I were young, we knew
To shout and laugh, to work and play,
And night was partner to the day
In all our joys. So swift time flew
On silent wings that, ere we wist,
The fleeting years had fled unmissed ;
And from our hearts this cry was wrung—
To fill with fond regret and tears,
The days of our remaining years—
“ When you and I were young, my boy,
When you and I were young.”

Not They Who Soar.

Not they who soar, but they who plod
Their rugged way, unhelped to God
Are heroes ; they who higher fare,
And flying, fan the upper air,
Miss all the toil that hugs the sod.
'Tis they whose backs have felt the rod,
Whose feet have pressed the path, unshod,
May smile upon defeated care,
Not they who soar.

High up there are no thorns to prod,
Nor boulders lurking 'neath the clod
To turn the keenness of the share ;
For flight is ever free and rare ;
But heroes, they the soil who've trod,
Not they who soar!

The Master-Player.

An old, worn harp that had been play'd,
Till all its strings were loose and fray'd.
Joy, Hate and Fear, each one essay'd
To play. But each in turn had found
No sweet responsiveness of sound.

Then Love the Master-Player came
With heaving breast and eyes aflame ;
The Harp he took all undismayed,
Smote on its strings, still strange to song.
And brought forth music sweet and strong.

After the Quarrel.

So we, who've supped the self-same cup,
To-night must lay our friendship by ;
Your wrath has burned your judgment up,
Hot breath has blown the ashes high.
You say that you are wronged—ah, well,
I count that friendship poor at best—
A bauble, a mere bagatelle,
That cannot stand so slight a test.

I fain would still have been your friend
And talked and laughed and loved with you,
But since it must, why, let it end ;
The false but dies, 'tis not the true.
So we are favored, you and I,
Who only want the living truth.
It was not good to nurse the lie ;
'Tis well it died in harmless youth.

I go from you to-night to sleep.
Why, what's the odds ? why should I grieve ?
I have no fund of tears to weep
For happenings that undeceive.

The days shall come, the days shall go
Just as they came and went before.
The sun shall shine, the streams shall flow
Tho' you and I are friends no more.

And in the volume of my years,
Where all my thoughts and acts shall be,
The page whereon your name appears
Shall be forever sealed to me.
Not that I hate you over-much,
'Tis less of hate than love defied ;
Howe'er, our hands no more shall touch,
We'll go our ways, the world is wide.

Unexpressed.

Deep in my heart that aches with the repression,
And strives with plenitude of bitter pain,
There lives a thought that clamors for expression,
And spends its undelivered force in vain.

What boots it that some other may have thought it ?
The right of thoughts' expression is divine ;
The price of pain I pay for it has bought it,
I care not who lays claim to it—'tis mine !

And yet not mine until it be delivered ;
The manner of its birth shall prove the test.
Alas, alas, my rock of pride is shivered—
I beat my brow—the thought still unexpressed

Ere Sleep Comes Down to Soothe the Weary Eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes,
Which all the day with ceaseless care have sought
The magic gold which from the seeker flies ;
Ere dreams put on the gown and cap of thought,
And make the waking world a world of lies—
Of lies most palpable, uncouth, forlorn,
That say life full of aches and tears and sighs ;
Oh, how with more than dreams the soul is torn—
Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes,
How all the griefs and heartaches we have known
Come up like pois'nous vapors that arise
From some base witch's cauldron, when the crone
To work some potent spell, her magic plies.
The past which held its share of bitter pain,
Whose ghost we prayed that Time might exorcise,
Comes up, is lived and suffered o'er again,
Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes,
What phantoms fill the dimly lighted room ;
What ghostly shades in awe-creating guise
Are bodied forth within the teeming gloom.
What echoes faint of sad and soul-sick cries,

And pangs of vague indefinable pain
That pay the spirit's ceaseless enterprise,

Come thronging thro' the chambers of the brain,
Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes,

Where ranges forth the spirit far and free ?

Thro' what strange realms and unfamiliar skies

Tends her far course to lands of mystery ?

To lands unspeakable—beyond surmise,

Where shapes unknowable to being spring,

Till faint of wing, the Fancy fails and dies

Much wearied with the spirit's journeying,

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes.

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes,

How questioneth the soul that other soul—

The inner sense which neither cheats nor lies,

But self exposes unto self, a scroll

Full writ with all life's acts unwise or wise,

In characters indelible and known ;

So, trembling with the shock of sad surprise,

The soul doth view its awful self alone,

Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes.

When sleep comes down to seal the weary eyes,

The last dear sleep whose soft embrace is balm,
And whom sad sorrow teaches us to prize

For kissing all our passions into calm,

Ah then, no more we heed the sad world's cries,

Or seek to probe th' eternal mystery,
Or fret our souls at long withheld replies,
At glooms thro' which our visions cannot see,
When sleep comes down to seal the weary eyes.

A Starry Night.

A cloud fell down from the heavens,
And broke on the mountain's brow ;
It scattered the dusky fragments
All over the vale below.

The moon and the stars were anxious
To know what its fate might be ;
So they rushed to the azure op'ning,
And all peered down to see.

The Lesson.

My cot was down by a cypress grove,
And I sat by my window the whole night long,
And heard well up from the deep dark wood
A mocking bird's passionate song.

And I thought of myself so sad and lone,
And my life's cold winter that knew no spring ;
Of my mind so weary and sick and wild,
Of my heart too sad to sing.

But e'en as I listened the mock-bird's song,
A thought stole into my saddened heart,
And I said, "I can cheer some other soul
By a carol's simple art.

For oft from the darkness of hearts and lives
Come songs that brim with joy and light,
As out of the gloom of the cypress grove
The mocking-bird sings at night.

So I sang a lay for a brother's ear
In a strain to soothe his bleeding heart,
And he smiled at the sound of my voice and lyre,
Tho' mine was a feeble art.

But at his smile, I smiled in turn
And into my soul there came a ray :
In trying to soothe another's woes
Mine own had passed away.

Dawn.

An angel, robed in spotless white,
Bent down and kissed the sleeping Night.
Night woke to blush ; the sprite was gone.
Men saw the blush and called it Dawn.

A Lyric.

My lady love lives far away,
And oh my heart is sad by day,
And ah my tears fall fast by night,
What may I do in such a plight.

Why, miles grow few when love is fleet,
And love, you know, hath flying feet :
Break off thy sighs and witness this,
How poor a thing mere distance is.

My love knows not I love her so,
And would she scorn me, did she know ?
How may the tale I would impart
Attract her ear and storm her heart ?

Calm thou the tempest in thy breast,
Who loves in silence loves the best,
But bide thy time, she will awake,
No night so dark but morn will break.

But tho' my heart so strongly yearn,
My lady loves me not in turn,
How may I win the blest reply
That my void heart shall satisfy.

Love breedeth love, be thou but true,
And soon thy Love shall love thee, too ;
If Fate hath meant you heart for heart,
There's naught may keep you twain apart.

Phyllis.

Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day,
Few are my years, but my griefs are not few,
Ever to youth should each day be a May-day,
Warm wind and rose-breath and diamonded dew—
Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day

Oh for the sunlight that shines on a May-day ;
Only the cloud hangeth over my life.
Love that should bring me youth's happiest hey-day,
Brings me but seasons of sorrow and strife ;
Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day.

Sunshine or shadow, or gold day or gray day,
Life must be lived as our destinies rule ;
Leisure or labor or work day or play day—
Feasts for the famous and fun for the fool ;
Phyllis, ah, Phyllis, my life is a gray day.

Right's Security.

What if the wind do howl without,
And turn the creaking weather-vane ;
What if the arrows of the rain
Do beat against the window pane.
Art thou not armored strong and fast
Against the sallies of the blast ?
Art thou not sheltered safe and well
Against the flood's insistent swell ?

What boots it, that thou stand'st alone,
And laughest in the battle's face
When all the weak have fled the place
And let their feet and fears keep pace?
Thou wavest still thine ensign, high,
And shoutest thy loud battle cry;
Higher than e'er the tempest roared,
It cleaves the silence like a sword.

Right arms and armors too, that man
Who will not compromise with wrong;
Tho' single he must front the throng,
And wage the battle hard and long.
Minorities, since time began,
Have shown the better side of man;
And often in the lists of Time,
One man has made a cause sublime!

Old.

I have seen peoples come and go
Alike the Ocean's ebb and flow;
I have seen kingdoms rise and fall
Like springtime shadows on a wall.
I have seen houses rendered great
That grew from life's debased estate,
And all, all, all is change I see,
So, dearest God, take me, take me.

How Shall I Woo Thee?

How shall I woo thee to win the, mine own ?
Say in what tongue shall I tell of my love.
I who was fearless so timid have grown,
All that was eagle has turned into dove.
The path from the meadow that leads to the bars
Is more to me now than the path of the stars.

How shall I woo thee to win thee, mine own,
Thou who art fair and as far as the moon ?
Had I the strength of the torrent's wild tone,
Had I the sweetness of warblers in June ;
The strength and the sweetness might charm and
persuade,
But neither have I my petition to aid.

How shall I woo thee to win thee, mine own ?
How shall I traverse the distance between
My humble cot and your glorious throne ?
How shall a clown gain the ear of a queen ?
Oh teach me the tongue that shall please thee the best,
For till I have won thee my heart may not rest.

A Summer's Night.

The night is dewy as a maiden's mouth,
The skies are bright as are a maiden's eyes,
Soft as a maiden's breath, the wind that flies
Up from the perfumed bosom of the South.

Like sentinels, the pines stand in the park ;
And hither hastening like rakes that roam,
With lamps to light their wayward footsteps home,
The fire-flies come stagg'ring down the dark.

Song.

My heart to thy heart,
My hand to thine ;
My lips to thy lips,
Kisses are wine
Brewed for the lover in sunshine and shade,
Let me drink deep then, my African maid.

Lily to lily,
Rose unto rose ;
My love to thy love
Tenderly grows.
Rend not the oak and the ivy in twain,
Nor the swart maid from her swarthier swain.

One Life.

Oh, I am hurt to death, my Love,
The shafts of Fate have pierced my striving heart,
And I am sick and weary of
The endless pain and smart.
My soul is weary of the strife
And chafes at life, and chafes at life.

Time mocks me with fair promises ;
A blooming future grows a barren past,
Like rain my fair full-blossomed trees
 Unburden in the blast.
The harvest fails on grain and tree,
Nor comes to me, nor comes to me.

The stream that bears my hopes abreast
 Turns ever from my way its pregnant tide.
My laden boat, torn from its rest,
 Drifts to the other side.
So all my hopes are set astray,
And drift away, and drift away.

The lark sings to me at the morn,
 And near me wings her skyward soaring flight ;
But pleasure dies as soon as born ;
 The owl takes up the night,
And night seems long and doubly dark ;
I miss the lark, I miss the lark.

Let others labor as they may,
 I'll sing and sigh alone and write my line.
Their fate is theirs, or grave or gay,
 And mine shall still be mine,
I know the world holds joy and glee,
But not for me—'tis not for me.

If I Could But Forget.

If I could but forget
The fullness of those first sweet days,
When you burst sun-like thro' the haze
Of unacquaintance, on my sight,
And made the wet, gray day seem bright
While clouds themselves grew fair to see.

And since, no day is gray or wet,
But all the scene comes back to me,

If I could but forget.

If I could but forget
How your dusk eyes look into mine,
And how I thrilled as with strong wine
Beneath your touch ; while sped amain
The quickened stream thro' ev'ry vein ;
How near my breath fell to a gasp,

When for a space our fingers met
In one electric vibrant clasp,

If I could but forget.

If I could but forget
The months of passion and of pain,
And all that followed in their train—
Rebellious thoughts that would arise,
Rebellious tears that dimmed mine eyes,
The prayers that I might set love's fire

Aflame within your bosom yet—
The death at last of that desire—

If I could but forget.

Invitation to Love.

Come when the nights are bright with stars,
Or when the moon is mellow ;
Come when the Sun his golden bars
Drops on the hay-field mellow.
Come in the twilight soft and gray,
Come in the night or come in the day,
Come, oh Love, whene'er you may,
And you are welcome, welcome.

You are sweet, oh love, dear Love,
You are soft as the nesting dove,
Come to my heart and bring it rest
As the bird flies home to its welcome nest.

Come when my heart is full of grief,
Or when my heart is merry ;
Come with the falling of the leaf,
Or with the redd'ning cherry
Come when the year's first blossom blows,
Come when the summer gleams and glows,
Come with the winter's drifting snows
And you are welcome, welcome.

A Prayer.

Oh Lord, the hard won miles
Have worn my stumbling feet ;
Oh soothe me with thy smiles
And make my life complete.

The thorns were thick and keen
Where'er I trembling trod ;
The way was long between
My wounded feet and God.

Hymn.

When storms arise
And dark'ning skies
About me threat'ning lower ;
To Thee, oh Lord, I raise mine eyes,
To Thee my tortured spirit flies
For solace in that hour.

Thy mighty arm
Will let no harm
Come near me nor befall me ;
Thy voice shall quiet my alarm,
When life's great battle waxeth warm—
No foeman shall appall me.

Upon thy breast
Secure I rest,
From sorrow and vexation ;
No more by sinful cares oppressed,
But in thy presence ever blest,
Oh God of my salvation.

Riding to Town.

When labor is light and the morning is fair,
I find it a pleasure beyond all compare
To hitch up my nag and go hurrying down
And take Katie May for a ride into town ;
For bumpety-bump goes the wagon,
 But tra-la-la-la our lay,
There's joy in a song as we rattle along
 In the light of the glorious day.

A coach would be fine, but a spring wagon's good ;
My jeans is a match for Kate's gingham and hood ;
The hills take us up and the vales take us down,
But what matters that ! we are riding to town,
 And bumpety-bump goes the wagon,
 But tra-la-la-la sing we.
There's never a care may live in the air
 That is filled with the breath of our glee.

And after we've started, there's naught can repress
The thrill of our hearts in their wild happiness ;
The heavens may smile or the heavens may frown,
And its all one to us when we're riding to town.
 For bumpety-bump goes the wagon,
 But tra-la-la-la we shout,
For our hearts they are clear and there's nothing
 to fear,
 And we've never a pain nor a doubt.

The wagon is weak and the roadway is rough,
And tho' it is long it is not long enough,
For 'mid all my ecstacies this is the crown
To sit beside Katie and ride into town,
When bumpety-bump goes the wagon,
But tra-la-la-la our song,
And if I had my way—I'd be willing to pay
If the road could be made twice as long.

Good Night.

The lark is silent in his nest,
The breeze is sighing in its flight,
Sleep Love and peaceful be thy rest,
Good night my love, good night, good night.

Sweet dreams attend thee in the sleep,
To soothe thy rest till morning's light,
And angels round you vigil keep
Good night my love, good night, good night.

Sleep well my love on night's dark breast,
And ease thy soul with slumber bright ;
Be joy but thine and I am blest
Good night my love, good night, good night.

Alice.

Know you winds that blow your course
Down the verdant valleys,
That somewhere you must, perforce,
Kiss the brow of Alice?
When her gentle face you find,
Kiss it softly, naughty wind.

Roses waving fair and sweet
Thro' the garden alleys,
Grow into a glory meet
For the eye of Alice;
Let the wind your offering bear
Of sweet perfume, faint and rare.

Lily holding crystal dew
In your pure white chalice,
Nature kind hath fashioned you
Like the soul of Alice;
It of purest white is wrought,
Filled with gems of crystal thought.

Ballad.

I know my love is true,
And oh the day is fair,
The sky is clear and blue,
The flowers are rich of hue,

The air I breathe is rare,
I have no grief or care ;
For my own love is true,
And oh the day is fair.

My love is false I find,
And oh the day is dark.
Blows sadly down the wind,
While sorrow holds my mind ;
I do not hear the lark,
For quenched is life's dear spark—
My love is false I find,
And oh the day is dark !

For love doth make the day
Or dark or doubly bright ;
Her beams along the way
Dispel the gloom and gray.
She lives and all is bright,
She dies and life is night.
For love doth make the day,
Or dark or doubly bright.

The Mystery.

I was not ; now I am—a few days hence,
I shall not be ; I fain would look before
And after, but can neither do ; some Pow'r
Or lack of pow'r says “ no ” to all I would.

I stand upon a wide and sunless plain,
Nor chart nor steel to guide my steps aright.
Whene'er, o'ercoming fear, I dare to move,
I grope without direction and by chance.
Some feign to hear a voice and feel a hand
That draws them ever upward thro' the gloom.
But I—I hear no voice and touch no hand,
Tho' oft thro' silence infinite, I list,
And strain my hearing to supernal sounds ;
Tho' oft thro' fateful darkness do I reach,
And stretch my hand to find that other hand.
I question of th' eternal bending skies
That seem to neighbor with the novice earth ;
But they roll on and daily shut their eyes
On me, as I one day shall do on them,
And tell me not the secret that I ask.

Promise.

I grew a rose within a garden fair
And tending it, with more than loving care,
I thought how, with the glory of its bloom,
I should the darkness of my life illume ;
And watching, ever smiled to see the lusty bud,
Drink freely in the summer sun to tint its blood.

My rose began to open, and its hue
Was sweet to me as to it, sun and dew :
I watched it taking on its ruddy flame
Until the day of perfect blooming came,
Then, hastened I with smiles, to find it blushing red—
Too late ! Some thoughtless child had plucked my
rose and fled !

füllment.

I grew a rose once more to please mine eyes.
All things to aid it, dew, sun, wind, fair skies
Were kindly : and to shield it from despoil,
I fenced it safely in with grateful toil.
No other hand than mine shall pluck this flower said I,
And I was jealous of the bee that hovered nigh.

It grew for days. I stood hour after hour
To watch the slow unfolding of the flow'r.
And then I did not leave its side at all,
Lest some mischance, my flower should befall.
At last, Oh joy ! the central petals burst apart.
It blossomed—but alas ! a worm was at its heart !

Preparation.

The little bird sits in the nest and sings
 A shy, soft song to the morning light ;
And it flutters a little and prunes its wings.
 The song is halting and poor and brief,
 And the fluttering wings scarce stir a leaf ;
But the note is a prelude to sweeter things,
 And the busy bill and the flutter slight
 Are proving the wings for a bolder flight !

Retort.

“Thou art a fool,” said my head to my heart,
“Indeed, the greatest of fools, thou art
 To be led astray by the trick of a tress,
By a smiling face or a ribbon smart.”
 And my heart was in sore distress.

Then Phyllis came by, and her face was fair,
The light gleamed soft on her raven hair ;
 And her lips were blooming a rosy red.
Then my heart spoke out with a right bold air ;
 “Thou art worse than a fool, Oh head !”

Disappointed.

An old man planted and dug and tended,
Toiling in joy from dew to dew :
The Sun was kind and the rain befriended :
 Fine grew his orchard and fair to view.
Then he said : “ I will quiet my thrifty fears,
For here is fruit for my failing years.”

But even then the storm-clouds gathered,
Swallowing up the azure sky ;
The sweeping winds into white foam lathered
 The placid breast of the bay, hard by ;
Then the spirits that raged in the darkened air
Swept o'er his orchard and left it bare.

The old man stood in the rain, uncaring,
Viewing the place the storm had swept ;
And then with a cry from his soul despairing,
 He bowed him down to the earth, and wept.
But a voice cried aloud from the driving rain :
“Arise, old man, and plant again !”

The Song.

My soul, lost in the music's mist,
Roamed, rapt 'neath skies of amethyst.
The cheerless streets grew summer meads,
The Son of Phœbus spurred his steeds,

And wand'ring down the mazy tune,
December lost its way in June,
While from a verdant vale I heard
The piping of a love-lorn bird.

A something in the tender strain
Revived an old, long-conquered pain
And as in depths of many seas,
My heart was drowned in memories.

The tears came welling to my eyes,
Nor could I ask it otherwise ;
For, oh ! a sweetness seems to last
Amid the dregs of sorrows past.

It stirred a chord that here of late
I'd grown to think could not vibrate.
It brought me back the trust of youth,
The world again was joy and truth.
And Avice, blooming like a bride,
Once more stood trusting at my side.
But still with bosom desolate,
The 'lorn bird sang to find his mate.

Then there are trees, and lights and stars,
The silv'ry tinkle of guitars ;
And throbs again as throbbed that waltz,
Before I knew that hearts were false.
Then like a cold wave on a shore,
Comes silence and she sings no more.
I wake, I breathe, I think again,
And walk the sordid ways of men.

Humor

: : : : and : : : :

Dialect.

Humor and Dialect.

The Party.

Dey had a gread big pahty down to Tom's de othah
night ;
Was I dah ? You bet ! I nevah in my life see sich a
sight ;
All de folks f'om fou' plantations was invited an' dey
come,
Dey come troopin' thick ez chillun when dey heahs a
fife an' drum.
Evahbody dressed dere fines'—Heish yo' mouf an' git
away,
Ain't seen no sich fancy dressin' sence las' quah'tly
meetin' day ;
Gals all dressed in silks an' satins, not a wrinkle ner a
crease,
Eyes a-battin' teeth a-shinin' haih breshed back ez
slick ez grease ;
Sku'ts all tucked an' puffed an' ruffled, evah blessed
seam an' stitch ;
Ef you'd seen 'em wif deir mustus, could'nt swahed to
which was which.
Men all dressed up in Prince Alberts, swaller-tails 'u'd
tek yo' bref !

I cain't tell you nothin' 'bout it, y'ought to seen it fu'
yo'se'f.

Who was dah? Now who you askin? How you 'spect
I gwine to know?

You mus' think I stood an' counted evahbody at de
do'

Ole man Babah's house-boy Isaac, brung dat gal, Ma-
lindy Jane,

Huh a-hangin' to his elbow, him a-struttin' wif a cane;
My, but Hahvey Jones was jealous! seemed to stick
him like a tho'n;

But he laughed with Viney Cahteh, tryin' ha'd to not
let on,

But a pusson would a noticed f'om de d'rection of his
look,

Dat he was watchin' ev'ry step dat Ike an' Lindy took.
Ike he foun' a cheer an' asked huh: "Won't you set
down?" wif a smile,

An' she answe'd up a-bowin', "Oh I reckon 'tain't wuth
while."

Dat was jes' fu' style, I reckon, 'cause she set down jes'
de same,

An' she stayed dah till he fetched huh fu' to jine some
so't o' game;

Den I heerd huh sayin' propah, as she riz to go away,
"Oh, you raly mus' excuse me, fu' I hardly keers to
play"

But I seen huh in a minute wif de othahs on de flo',
An' dah wasn't anyone o' dem a-playin' any mo';

Comin' down de flo' a-bowin' an' a-swayin' an'
a-swingin',
Puttin' on huh high-toned mannahs all de time dat
she was singin':
'Oh swing Johnny up an' down, swing him all aroun',
Swing Johnny up an' down, swing him all aroun',
"Oh swing Johnny up an' down, swing him all aroun'
Fa' you well my darlin."
Had to laff at ole man Johnson, he's a caution now
you bet—
Hittin' clost onto a hunderd, but he's spry an' nim-
ble yet;
He 'lowed how a-so't o' gigglin', "I ain't ole I'll let you
see,
D'aint no use in gittin feeble, now you youngsters
jes' watch me,"
An' he grabbed ole Aunt Marier—weighs th'ee hun-
derd mo' er less,
An' he spun huh 'roun de cabin swingin' Johnny lak
de res',
Evahbody laffed an' hollahed: "Go it! Swing huh
Uncle Jim!
An' he swung thuh too, I reckon, lak a youngstah, who
but him.
Dat was bettah'n young Scott Thomas, tryin' to be so
awful smaht.
You know when dey gits to singin' an' dey comes to
dat ere paht:
 "In some lady's new brick house,
 In some lady's gahden.

Ef you don't let me out, I will jump out,
 So fa' you well my dahlin' ”
Den dey's got a circle 'roun' you, an' you's got to break
 de line ;
Well dat dahky was so anxious, lak to bust hisse'f
 a-tryin' ;
Kep' on blun'drin' 'roun' an' foolin' tell he giv' one
 gread big jump,
Broke de line, an' lit head-fo'most in de fiah-place
 right plump ;
Hit 'ad fiah in it, mind you ; well I thought my soul
 I'd bust,
Tried my best to keep f'om laffin' but hit seemed like
 die I must,
Y' ought to seen dat man a-scramblin' f'om de ashés
 an' de grime.
Did it b'un him ! Sich a question, why he didn't give
 it time ;
Th'ow'd them ashes and dem cinders evah which-a-
 way I guess,
An' you nevah did, I reckon clap yo' eyes on sich a
 mess ;
Fu' he sholy made a picter an' a funny one to boot,
Wif his clothes all full o' ashes an' his face all full o'
 soot.
Well, hit laked to stopped de pahty, an' I reckon lak
 ez not
Dat it would ef Tom's wife, Mandy, hadn't happened
 on de spot,

To invite us out to suppah—well, we scrambled to de table,
An' I'd lak to tell you 'bout it—what we had—but I ain't able,
Mention jes' a few things dough, I know I hadn't orter,
Fu' I know 'twill staht a hank'rin' an' yo' mouf 'll 'mence to worter.
We had wheat bread white ez cotton an' a egg pone jes like gol',
Hog jole, bilin' hot an' steamin' roasted shoat an' ham sliced cold—
Look out ! What's de mattah wif you ? Don't be fallin' on de flo';
Ef its go'n' to 'fect you dat way, I won't tell you nothin' mo'
Dah now—well we had hot chittlin's —now you'se tryin' again to fall,
Cain't you stan' to heah about it ? 'Spose you'd been an' seed it all ;
Seed dem gread big sweet pertaters, layin' by de possum's side,
Seed dat coon in all his gravy, reckon den you'd up an died !
Mandy, 'lowed "you all mus' 'scuse me, d'want much upon my she'ves,
But I've done my bes' to suit you, so set down an' he'p yo'se'ves."
Tom, he 'lowed : " I don't b'lieve in 'pologizin' an' per-fessin,'

Let 'em tek it lak dey ketch it, Eldah Thompson ask
de blessin' ”

Wish you'd seed dat colo'ed preachah, cleah his th'oat
an' bow his head ;

One eye shet, an' one eye open—dis is evah wud he
said :

“ Lawd look down in tendah mussy on sich generous
hawts ez dese ;

Make us truly thankful, amen. Pass dat possum, ef
yo' please ! ”

Well, we eat and drunk ouah po'tion, twel dah was'nt
nothin' lef,

An' we felt jes like new sausage, we was mos' nigh
stuffed to def !

Tom, he knowed how we'd be feelin, so he had de
fiddlah 'roun'

An' he made us cleah de cabin fu' to dance dat suppah
down.

Jim, de fiddlah, chuned his fiddle, put some rosum on
his bow,

Set a pine box on de table, 'mounted it an' let huh go !

He's a fiddlah now I tell you, an' he made dat fiddle
ring,

‘Twell de ol'est an' de lamest had to give deir feet a
fling.

Jigs, cotillions, reels an' break-downs, cordrills an' a
waltz er two ;

Bless yo' soul, dat music winged 'em an' dem people
lak to flew

Cripple Joe, de ole rheumatic, danced dat flo' f'om side
to middle,
Th'owed away his crutch an' hopped it, what's rheu-
matics 'ginst a fiddle ?
Eldah Thompson got so tickled dat he lak to lose his
grace,
Had to tek bofe feet an' hol' dem so 's to keep 'em in
deir place.
An' de Christuns an' de sinnahs got so mixed up on
dat flo',
Dat I don't see how dey'd pahted ef de trump had
chanced to blow.
Well, we danced dat way an' capahed in de mos' redic-
'lous way,
'Twell de roostahs in de bahn-yard cleahed deir th'oats
an' crowed fu' day
Y'ought to been dah, fu' I tell you evahthing was rich
an' prime,
An' dey ain't no use in talkin', we jes had one scrump-
tious time !

The Spellin' Bee.

I never shall furgit that night when father hitched up
Dobbin,
And all us youngsters clambered in an' down the road
went bobbin'
To school where we wuz kep' at work in every kind o'
weather,

But where that night a spellin' bee wuz callin' us together.
'Twuz one o' Heaven's banner nights, the stars wuz all a glitter,
The moon was shinin' like the hand o' God had jest now lit her.
The ground wuz white with spotless snow, the blast wuz sort o' stingin';
But underneath our round-about, you bet our hearts wuz singin'
That spellin' bee had be'n the talk o' many a precious moment,
The youngsters all wuz wild to see jes' what the precious show meant
An' we whose years wuz in their teens, was little less desirous
O' gittin' to the meetin' so's our sweethearts could admire us.
So on we went so anxious fur to satisfy our mission
That father had to box our ears, to smother our ambition,
But boxin' ears wuz too short work to hinder our arrivin',
He jest turned roun' an' smacked us all, an' kep' right on a drivin'
Well, soon the schoolhouse hove in sight, the winders beamin' brightly;
The sound o' talkin' reached our ears and voices laffin' lightly.
It puffed us up so full an' big 'at I'll jest bet a dollar,

There wan't a feller there but felt the strain upon his
collar.

So down we jumped an' in we went ez sprightly ez you
make 'em,

But somethin' grabbed us by the knees an' straight
began to shake 'em.

Fur once within that lighted room, our feelin's took a
canter,

An' scurried to the zero mark ez quick ez Tam
O'Shanter.

Cause there wuz crowds o' people there, both sexes an'
all stations;

It looked like all the town had come an' brought all
their relations.

The first I saw wuz Nettie Gray, I thought that girl
was dearer

'N' gold an' when I got a chance, you bet I aidged up
near her.

An' Farmer Dobbs girl wuz there, the one 'at Jim
was sweet on,

An' Cyrus Jones an' Mandy Smith an' Faith 'an
Patience Deaton.

Then Parson Brown an' Lawyer Jones were present—
all attention,

An' piles on piles of other folks too numerous to
mention.

The master rose an' briefly said : "Good friends, dear
brother Crawford

To spur the pupils' minds along, a little prize has
offered.

To him who spells the best to-night—or 't may be 'her'
—no tellin'—

He offers ez a jest reward, this precious work on
spellin',

A little blue-backed spellun' book with fancy scarlet
trimmin' ;

We boys devoured it with our eyes—so did the girls
an' women.

He held it up where all could see, then on the table
set it,

An' ev'ry speller in the house felt mortal bound to
get it.

At his command we fell in line, prepared to do our
dooty,

Outspell the rest an' set 'em down, an' carry home the
booty.

'Twas then the merry times began, the blunders, an'
the laffin',

The nudges an' the nods an' winks an' stale good-
natured chaffin'

Ole Uncle Hirain Dane wuz there, the closest man a
livin',

Whose only bugbear seemed to be the dreadful fear o'
givin'

His beard was long, his hair uncut, his clothes all bare
an' dingy ;

It wuzn't 'cause the man wuz pore, but jest so mortal
stingy.

An' there he set by Sally Riggs a smilin' an' a smirkin',
An' all his children lef' to home a diggin' an' a workin'

A widower, he wuz an' Sal was thinkin' 'at she'd wing
him;

I reckon he wuz wond'rin' what them rings o' her'n
would bring him.

An' when the spellin' test commenced, he up an' took
his station,

A-spellin' with the best o' them to beat the very nation.

An' when he'd spell some youngster down, he'd turn to
look at Sally,

An' say : "The teachin' now-a-days can't be o' no great
vally "

But true enough the adage says, "Pride walks in
slipp'ry places,"

Fur soon a thing occurred that put a smile on all our
faces.

The laffter jest kep' ripplin' 'roun' an' teacher couldn't
quell it,

Fur when he give out "charity," ole Hiram couldn't
spell it.

But laffin's ketchin' an' it throwed some others off
their bases,

An' folks 'ud miss the very word that seemed to fit
their cases.

Why, fickle little Jessie Lee come near the house up-
settin'

By puttin' in a double kay to spell the word coquettin'
An' when it come to Cyrus Jones, it tickled me all
over—

Him settin' up to Mandy Smith an' got sot down on
"lover."

But Lawyer Jones of all gone men did shorely look
the gonest,
When he found out that he'd furgot to put the "h" in
"honest."
An' Parson Brown whose sermons were too long fu
toleration,
Caused lots o' smiles by missin' when they give out
"condensation."
So one by one they giv it up—the big words kep' a
landin',
Till me an' Nettie Gray wuz left, the only ones
a-standin',
An' then my inward strife began—I guess my mind
was petty—
I did so want that spellin' book ; but then to spell
down Nettie
Jest sort o' went agin my grain—I somehow couldn't
do it,
An' when I git a notion fixed, I'm great on stickin'
to it.
So when they giv' the next word out—I hadn't orter
tell it,
But then 'twas all fur Nettie's sake—I missed so's she
could spell it.
She spelt the word, then looked at me so lovin'-like an'
mello',
I tell you 't sent a hundred pins a-shootin' through a
fello'
O' course I had to stand the jokes an' chattin' of the
fello's,

But when they handed her the book I vow I wasn't
jealous.
We sung a hymn an' Parson Brown dismissed us like
he orter,
Fur la! he'd learned a thing er two an' made his
blessin' shorter.
'Twas late an' cold when we got out, but Nettie liked
cold weather,
An' so did I, so we agreed we'd jest walk home
together.
We both wuz silent, fur of words we nuther had a
surplus,
"Till she spoke out quite sudden like, "You missed
that word on purpose."
Well, I declare it frightened me; at first I tried
denyin',
But Nettie, she jest smiled an' smiled, she knowed that
I was lyin'
Sez she: "That book is your'n by rights;" sez I: "It
never could be—
I—I—you—ah—" an' there I stuck, an' well she
understood me.
So we agreed that later on when age had giv' us tether,
We'd jine our lots an' settle down to own that book
together.

An Ante-Bellum Sermon.

We is gathahed hyeah, my brothah,
 In dis howlin' wildaness,
 Fer to speak some words of comfo't
 To each othah in distress.
 An' we chooses fer ouah subjic'
 Dis—we'll 'spain it by an' by ;
 "An' de Lawd said Moses, Moses,
 An' de man said, 'Hyeah am I.' "

Now ole Pher'oh, down in Egypt,
 Was de wuss man evah bo'n,
 An' he had de Hebrew chillun,
 Down dah wukin' in his co'n ;
 'Twell de Lawd got tiahed o' his foolin',
 An' sez he : " I'll let him know—
 Look hyeah, Moses, go tell Pher'oh
 Fu' to let dem chillen go.

An' ef he refuse to do it,
 I will make him rue de houah,
 Fu' I'll empty down on Egypt
 All de vials of my powah."
 Yes, he did—an' Pher'oh's ahmv
 Wasn't wuth a ha'f a dime ;
 Fu' de Lawd will he'p his chillun,
 You kin trust him ev'ry time.

An' yo' enemies may 'sail you
 In de back an' in de front ;
 But de Lawd is all aroun' you,
 Fu' to ba' de battle's brunt.
 Dey kin fo'ge yo' chains an' shackles
 F'om de mountains to de sea ;
 But de Lawd will sen' some Moses
 Fu' to set his chillun free.

An' de lan' shall hyeah his thundah,
 Lak a blas' f'om Gab'el's ho'n,
 Fu' de Lawd of hosts is mighty
 When he girds his ahmor on.
 But fu' feah some one mistakes me,
 I will pause right hyeah to say,
 Dat I'm still a-preachin' ancient.
 I ain't talkin' 'bout to-day.

But I tell you, fellah christuns,
 Things 'll happen mighty strange ;
 Now, de Lawd done dis fu' Isrul,
 An' his ways don't nevah change.
 An' de love he showed to Isrul
 Wasn't all on Isrul spent ;
 Now don't run an' tell yo' mastahs
 Dat I'se preachin' discontent.

'Cause I isn't ; I'se a judgin'
 Bible people by deir ac's ;
 I'se a givin' you de Scriptuah.
 I'se a handin' you de fac's.

Cose ole Pher'oh believed in slav'ry,
 But de Lawd he let him see,
 Dat de people he put bref in,—
 Evah mothah's son was free.

An' dahs othahs thinks lak Pher'oh,
 But dey calls de Scriptuah liar,
 Fu' de Bible says "a servant
 Is a worthy of his hire."
 An' you caint git roun' nor thoo dat,
 An' you cain't git ovah it,
 Fu' whatevah place you git in,
 Dis hyeah Bible too 'll fit.

So you see de Lawd's intention
 Evah sence de worl' began,
 Was dat His almighty freedom
 Should belong to evah man,
 But I think it would be bettah,
 Ef I'd pause agin to say,
 That I'm talkin' bout ouah freedom
 In a Bibleistic way

But de Moses is a comin,
 An' he's comin, suah and fas'
 We kin hyeah his feet a-trompin',
 We kin hyeah his trumpit blas.'
 But I want to wa'n you people,
 Don't you git too brigity;
 An' don't you git to braggin'
 'Bout dese things, you wait an' see.

But when Moses wif his powah,
 Comes an' sets us chillen free,
 We will praise de gracious Mastah
 Dat has gin us liberty ;
 An' we'll shout ouah halleluyahs,
 On dat mighty reck'nin' day,
 When we'se reco'nized ez citiz'—
 Huh uh ! Chilien let us pray !

A Banjo Song.

Oh, dere's lots o' care an' trouble
 In dis world to swaller down :
 An' ol' Sorrer's party lively
 In her way o' gittin' roun',
 Yet dere's times when I furgit 'em—
 Aches an' pains an' troubles all—
 An' it's when I take at ebenin'
 My ol' banjo f'um de wall.

'Bout de time dat night is fallin'
 An' my daily wu'k is done.
 An' above de shady hilltops
 I kin see de settin' sun ;
 When de quiet, restful shadders
 Is beginnin' jes' to fall—
 Den I take de little banjo
 F'um its place upon de wall.

Den my fam'ly gadders roun' me
 In de fadin' o' de light,
 Ez I strike de strings to try 'em
 Ef dey all is tuned er-right.
 An' it seems we're so nigh heaben
 We kin hyeah de angels sing
 When de music o' dat banjo
 Sets my cabin all er-ring.

An' my wife an' all de chillun—
 Male an' female, small an' big—
 Even up to gray-haired granny,
 Seem jes' boun' to do a jig :
 'Twell I change de style o' music,
 Change de movement an' de time,
 An' de ringin' little banjo
 Plays an ol' hea't-feelin' hime.

An' somehow my th'oat gits choky,
 An' a lump keeps tryin' to rise.
 Lak it wan'ed to ketch de water
 Dat was flowin' to my eyes ;
 An' I feel dat I could sorter
 Knock de socks clean off o' sin
 Ez I hyeah my po' ol' granny
 Wid huh tremblin' voice jine in.

Den we all th'ow in our voices
 Fu' to he'p de chune out too,
 Lak a big camp-meetin' choiry
 Tryin' to sing a mou nah th'os.

An' our th'oats let out de music.
 Sweet an' solemn, loud an' free,
 'Twell de raftahs o' my cabin
 Echo wid de melody

Oh, de music o' de banjo,
 Quick an' deb'lish, solemn, slow,
 Is de greatest joy an' solace
 Dat a weary slave kin know !
 So jes let me hyeah it ringin'
 Do' de chune be po' an' rough,
 It's a pleasure : an' de pleasures
 O' dis life is few enough.

Now, de blessed little angels
 Up in heaben, we are told,
 Don't do nothin' all dere lifetime
 'Ceptin' play on ha'ps o' gold.
 Now I think heaben'd be mo' homelike
 Ef we'd hyeah some music fall
 F'um a real ol'-fashioned banjo,
 Like dat one upon de wall.

The Ol' Tunes.

You kin talk about yer anthems
 An' yer arias an' sich,
 An' yer modern choir singin'
 That you think so awful rich :

But you orter heerd us youngsters
In the times now far away,
A-singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way.

There was some o' us sung treble
An' a few o' us growled bass,
An' the side o' song flowed smoothly
With its complement o' grace ;
There was spirit in that music,
An' a kind o' solemn sway,
A singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way

I remember oft o' standin'
In my homespun pantaloons—
On my face the bronze an' freckles
O' the suns o' youthful Junes—
Thinkin' that no mortal minstrel
Ever chanted sich a lay
As the ol' tunes we was singin'
In the ol'-fashioned way

The boys 'ud always lead us,
An' the girls 'ud all chime in,
'Till the sweetness o' the singin'
Robbed the list'nin' soul o' sin ;
An' I ust to tell the parson
"Twas as good to sing as pray
When the people sung the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way

How I long agin to hear it,
Pourin' forth from soul to soul,
With the treble high an' meller,
An' the bass's mighty roll ;
But the times is very diff'rent,
An' the music heerd to-day
Ain't the singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way

Little screechin' by a woman,
Little squawkin' by a man,
Then the organ's twiddle-twaddle,
Just the empty space to span.—
An' ef you should even think it,
Tisn't proper fur to say
That you want to hear the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way

But I think that some bright mornin',
When the toils of life air o'er,
An' the sun o'heaven arisin'
Glads with light the happy shore ;
I shall hear the angel chorus,
In the realms o' endless day,
A singin' o' the ol' tunes
In the ol'-fashioned way

A Negro Love Song.

Seen my lady home las' night,
Jump back honey, jump back.
Hel' huh han' an' sque'z it tight,
Jump back honey, jump back.
Heahd huh sigh a little sigh,
Seen a light gleam f'um huh eye,
An' a smile go flitin' by--
Jump back honey, jump back.

Heahd de win' blow thoo de pines,
Jump back honey, jump back.
Mockin' bird was singin', fine,
Jump back honey, jump back.
An' my hea't was beatin' so,
When I reached my lady's do',
Dat I couldn't ba' to go--
Jump back, honey, jump back.

Put my ahm aroun' huh wais',
Jump back, honey, jump back.
Raised huh lips an' took a tase',
Jump back, honey, jump back.
Love me honey, love me true?
Love me well ez I love you?
An' she ansawhd : "'Cose I do"--
Jump back, honey, jump back.

When de Co'n Pone's Hot.

Dey is times in life, when Nature
 Seems to slip a cog an' go,
Jes' a rattlin' down creation.
 Lak an ocean's overflow ;
When de wor'l jes' stahts a-spinnin'
 Lak a picaninny's top,
An' yo' cup o' joy is brimmin'
 'Twel it seems about to slop.
An' you feel jes' lak a racah,
 Dat is trainin' fu' to trot—
When yo' mammy ses de blessin'
 An' de co'n pone's hot.

When you set down at de table.
 Kin' o' weary lak an' sad,
An' you'se jes' a little tiahed
 An' purhaps a little mad ;
How yo' gloom tu'ns into gladness.
 How yo' joy drives out de doubt
When de oven do' is opened,
 An' de smell comes po'in' out :
Why, de 'lectric light o' Heaven
 Seems to settle on de spot,
When yo' mammy ses de blessin'
 An' de co'n pone's hot.

When de cabbage pot is steamin'
An' de bacon good an' fat,
When de chittlin's is a sputter'n'
So's to show you whah dey's at ;
Take away yo' sody biscuit,
Take away yo' cake an' pie,
Fu' de glory time is comin',
An' its 'proachin' very nigh,
An' you want to jump an' hollah,
Do you know you'd bettah not,
When yo' mammy ses de blessin'
An' de co'n pone's hot.

I have heerd o' lots o' sermons,
An' I've heerd o' lots o' prayers ;
An' I've listened to some singin'
Dat has tuck me up de stairs
Of de Glory-Lan' an' set me
Jes' below de Mahster's th'one
An' have lef' my hawt a singin'
In a happy aftah tone.
But dem wu'ds so sweetly murmured
Seem to tech de softes' spot,
When my mammy ses de blessin',
An' de co'n pone's hot.

Lonesome.

Mother's gone a-visitin' to spend a month er two,
An' oh, the house is lonesome ez a nest whose birds has
flew

To other trees to build agin; the rooms seem jest so bare
That the echoes run like sperrits from the kitchen to
the stair.

The shetters flap more lazy-like 'n what they ust to do,
Sence mother's gone a-visitin' to spend a month er two.

We've killed the fattest chicken an' we've cooked her
to a turn;

We've made the richest gravy, but I jist don't give a
durn,

Fur nothin' 'at I drink er eat, er nothin' 'at I see.

The food ain't got the pleasant taste it ust to have to me.
They's somep'n' stickin' in my throat ez tight ez hard-
ened glue,

Sence mother's gone a-visitin' to spend a month er two.

The holly-hocks air jest ez pink, they're double ones at
that,

An' I wuz prouder of 'em than a baby of a cat.

But now I don't go near 'em, tho' they nod an' blush
at me,

Fur they's somep'n' seems to gall me in their keerless
sort o' glee

An' all their fren'ly noddin' an' their blushin' seems
to say :

" You're purty lonesome, John, old boy, sence mother's
gone away

The neighbors ain't so fren'ly ez it seems they'd ort
to be ;

They seem to be a-lookin' kinder sideways like at me,
A-kinder feared they'd tech me off ez ef I wuz a match,
An' all because 'at mother's gone an' I'm a-keepin'
batch !

I'm shore I don't do nothin' worse 'n what I ust to do
Fore mother went a visitin' to spend a month er two.

The sparrings ac's more fearsome like an' won't hop
quite so near,

The cricket's chirp is sadder an' the sky ain't ha'f so
clear ;

When ev'nin' comes, I set an' smoke tell my eyes begin
to swim,

An' things aroun' commence to look all blurred, an'
faint an' dim.

Well, I guess I'll have to own up 'at I'm feelin' purty
blue,

Sence mother's gone a-visitin' to spend a month er two.

The Wooing.

A youth went faring up and down.
Alack and well-a-day
He fared him to the market town.
Alack and well-a-day
And there he met a maiden fair,
With hazel eyes and auburn hair—
His heart went from him then and there
Alack and well-a-day.

She posies sold right merrily,
Alack and well-a-day ;
But not a flower was fair as she,
Alack and well-a-day.
He bought a rose and sighed a sigh
“Ah, dearest maiden, would that I
Might dare the seller too to buy,”
Alack and well-a-day.

She tossed her head—the coy coquette,
Alack and well-a-day.
“I’m not sir in the market yet ”
Alack and well a-day
Your love must cool upon a shelf ;
Tho’ much I sell for gold and pelf
I’m yet too young to sell myself
Alack and well-a-day

The youth was filled with sorrow sore
Alack and well-a-day
And looked he at the maid once more
Alack and well-a-day
Then loud he cried, " Fair maiden if
Too young to sell, now as I live,
You're not too young yourself to give "
Alack and well-a-day

The little maid cast down her eyes
Alack and well-a-day
And many a flush began to rise
Alack and well-a-day
" Why, since you are so bold," she said,
" I doubt not you are highly bred,
So take me!" and the twain were wed.
Alack and well-a-day.

The Corn-Stalk fiddle.

When the corn's all cut and the bright stalks shine
Like the burnished spears of a field of gold ;
When the field-mice rich on the nubbins dine,
And the frost comes white and the wind blows cold ;
Then its heigho fellows and hi-diddle-diddle,
For the time is ripe for the corn-stalk fiddle.

And you take a stalk that is straight and long,
With an expert eye to its worthy points,

And you think of the bubbling strains of song
That are bound between its pithy joints—
Then you cut out strings, with a bridge in the middle,
With a corn-stalk bow for a corn-stalk fiddle.

Then the strains that grow as you draw the bow
O'er the yielding strings with a practiced hand !
And the music's flow never loud but low
Is the concert note of a fairy band.
Oh, your dainty songs are a misty riddle
To the simple sweets of the corn-stalk fiddle.

When the eve comes on and our work is done
And the sun drops down with a tender glance,
With their hearts all prime for the harmless fun,
Come the neighbor girls for the evening's dance,
And they wait for the well-known twist and twiddle,
More time than tune—from the corn-stalk fiddle.

Then brother Jabez takes the bow.
While Ned stands off with Susan Bland.
Then Henry stops by Milly Snow
And John takes Nellie Jones's hand,
While I pair off with Mandy Biddle,
And scrape, scrape, scrape goes the corn-stalk fiddle.

“Salute your partners,” comes the call,
“All join hands and circle round,”
“Grand train back,” and “Balance all,”
Footsteps lightly spurn the ground.
“Take your lady and balance down the middle”
To the merry strains of the corn-stalk fiddle.

So the night goes on and the dance is o'er,
 And the merry girls are homeward gone,
 But I see it all in my sleep once more,
 And I dream till the very break of dawn
 Of an impish dance on a red-hot griddle
 To the screech and scrape of a corn-stalk fiddle.

Curtain.

Villain shows his indiscretion,
 Villian's partner makes confession.
 Juvenile, with golden tresses,
 Finds her pa and dons long dresses.
 Scape-grace comes home, money-laden,
 Hero comforts tearful maiden,
 Soubrette marries loyal chappie,
 Villain skips and all are happy

The Deserted Plantation.

Oh de grubbin-hoe's a rustin' in de co'nah,
 An' de plow's a tumblin' down in de fiel'—
 While de whippo'will's a wailin' lak a mou'nah,
 When his stubbo'n hawt is tryin' ha'd to yiel'

In de furrers wha' de co'n was allus wavin',
 Now de weeds is growin' green an' rank an' tall ;
 An de swallers roun' de whole place is a bravin'
 Lak dey thought their folks had allus owned it all.

An' de big house stan's all quiet lak an' solemn,
 Not a blessed soul in pa'lор, po'ch er lawn ;
 Not a guest, ner not a ca'iage lef' to haul 'em,
 Fu' de ones dat tu'ned de latch-string out air gone.

An' de banjo's voice is silent in de qua'ters,
 D'ain't a hymn ner co'n-song ringin' in de ah ;
 But de murmur of a branch's passin' waters
 Is de only soun' dat breks de stillness da.

Wha's de da'kies, dem dat ust to be a dancin'
 Ebry night befo' de ole cabin do' ?
 Wha's de chillun, dem dat ust to be a prancin',
 Er a rollin' in de san' er on de flo' ?

Wha's de Uncle Mordecai an' Uncle Aaron ?
 Wha's Aunt Doshy, Sam an' Kit an' all de res' ?
 Wha's ole Tom de da'ky fiddlah, how's he farin' ?
 Wha's de gals dat ust to sing an' dance de bes' ?

Gone ! not one o' dem is lef' to tell de story
 Dey have lef' de deah ole place to fall away.
 Couldn't one o' dem dat seed it in its glory
 Stay to watch it in de hour of decay ?

Dey have lef' de ole plantation to de swallers,
 But it hol's in me a lover till de las' ;
 Fu' I fin' hyeah in de memory dat follers
 All dat loved me an' dat I loved in de pas'

So I'll stay an' watch de deah ole place an' tend it
 Ez I ust to in de happy days gone by.
Twell de othah Mastah thinks it's time to end it,
 An' calls me to my qua'ters in de sky.

Accountability.

Folks aint got no right to censuah uthah folks about
 dey habits ;

Him dat giv de squir'l's de bushtails made de bobtails
 fu' de rabbits.

Him dat built de grea' big mountains hollered out de
 little valleys,

Him dat made de streets an' driveways wasn't shamed
 to make de alleys.

We is all constructed diff'rent, d'ain't no two of us de
 same ;

We can't he'p ouah likes an' dislikes, ef we'se bad we
 ain't to blame.

Ef we'se good, we needn't show off, case you bet it ain't
 ouah doin'

We gits into su'ttain channels dat we jes caint he'p
 pu'suin'

But we all fits into places dat no othah ones cud fill
An' we does the things we has to, big er little, good er
 ill.

John cain't tek de place o' Henry. Su an' Sally ain't alike ;
Bass ain't nuthin' like a suckah. chub ain't nuthin'
like a pike.

When you come to think about it, how it's all planned
out it's splendid.

Nuthin's done er evah happens, 'dout hit's sometin'
dat's intended :

Don't keer whut you does, you has to, an' hit sholy
beats de dickens,—

Viney go put on de kittle, I got one o' mastah's
chickens.

No Confidence.

Uncle John, he makes me tired :
Thinks 'at he's jest so all-fired
Smart, 'at he kin pick up, so,
Ever'thing he wants to know.
Tried to ketch me up last night.
But you bet I wouldn't bite.
I jest kep' the smoothes' face.
But I led him sich a chase.
Couldn't corner me, you bet—
I skipped all the traps he set.
Makin' out he wan'ed to know
Who was this an' that girl's beau ;
So's he'd find out, don't you see—
Who wuz goin' long with me.

But I answers jest ez sly,
An' I never winks my eye,
Tell he hollers with a whirl—
"Look here, ain't you got a girl?"
Y'ought 'o seen me spread my eyes,
Like he'd took me by surprise,
An' I said, "Oh, Uncle John,
Never thought o' havin' one."
An' somehow that seemed to tickle
Him an' he shelled out a nickle.
Then you ought to seen me leave
Just a laffin' in my sleeve.
Fool him—well, I guess I did ;
He ain't on to this here kid.
Got a girl ! well, I guess yes,
Got a dozen more or less,
But I got one reely one,
Not no foolin' ner no fun ;
Fur I'm sweet on her, you see,
An' I ruther guess 'at she
Must be kinder sweet on me,
So we're keepin' company.
Honest Injun ! this is true,
Ever' word I'm tellin' you !
But you won't be sich a scab
Ez to run aroun' an' blab.
Mebbe 'taint the way with you,
But you know some sellers do.
Spoils a girl to let her know
At you talk about her so.

Don't you know her, her name's Liz,
Nicest girl in town she is.
Perty, ah, git out, you gilly—
Liz 'ud purt 'nigh knock you silly
Y'ought 'o see her when she's dressed
All up in her Sunday best,
All the fellers nudgin' me,
An' a whisperin', gemunee!
Betcher life 'at I feel proud
When she passes by the crowd.
"T's kinder nice to be a-goin'
With a girl 'at makes some showin'—
One you know 'at hain't no snide,
Makes you feel so satisfied.
An' I'll tell you she's a trump,
Never even seen her jump
Like some silly girls 'ud do,
When I'd hide and holler "Boo!"
She'd jest laff an' say "Git out.
What you hollerin' about!"
When some girls 'ud have a fit
That 'un don't git skeered a bit,
Never makes a bit o' row
When she sees a worm er cow
Them kind's few an' far between;
Bravest girl I ever seen.
Tell you 'nuther thing she'll do,
Mebbe you won't think it's true,
But if she's jest got a dime
She'll go halvers ever' time.

Ah, you goose, you needn't laff :
That's the kinder girl to have.
If you knowed her like I do,
Guess you'd kinder like her too.
Tell you somep'n if you'll swear
You won't tell it anywhere.
Oh, you got to cross yer heart
Earnest, truly, 'fore I start.
Well, one day I kissed her cheek :
Gee, but I felt cheap an' weak,
'Cause at first she kinder flared,
'N' gracious goodness ! I was scared
But I needn't been, fer la !
Why, she never told her ma.
That's what I call grit, don't you ?
Sich a girl's worth stiekin' to.

After a Visit.

I be'n down in ole Kentucky
Fur a week er two, an' say,
'Twuz ez hard ez breakin' oxen
Fur to tear myse'f away
Allus argerin' 'bout fren'ship
An' yer hospitality—
Y'ain't no right to talk about it
Tell you be'n down there to see

See jest how they give you welcome
To the best that's in the land,
Feel the sort o'grip they give you
When they take you by the hand.
Hear 'em say, "We're glad to have you,
Better stay a week er two ;"
An' the way they treat you makes you
Feel that ev'ry word is true.

Feed you tell you hear the buttons
Crackin' on your Sunday vest ;
Haul you roun' to see the wonders
Tell you have to cry for rest.
Drink yer health an' pet an' praise you
Tell you git to feel ez great
Ez the Sheriff o' the county
Er the Gov'ner o' the State.

Wife, she sez I must be crazy
'Cause I go on so, an' Nelse
He 'lows, "Goodness gracious ! daddy,
Cain't you talk about nuthin' else ?"
Well, pleg-gone it, I'm jes tickled,
Bein' tickled ain't no sin ;
I've b'en down in ole Kentucky
An' I want o' go ag'in.

The Made to Order Smile.

When a woman looks up at you with a twist about her eyes,
And her brows are half uplifted in a nicely feigned surprise
As you breathe some pretty sentence, though she hates you all the while,
She is very apt to stun you with a made to order smile.

It's a subtle combination of a sneer and a caress,
With a dash of warmth thrown in it to relieve its iciness,
And she greets you when she meets you with that look as if a file
Had been used to fix and fashion out that made to order smile.

I confess that I'm eccentric and am not a woman's man,
For they seem to be constructed on the bunko fakir plan,
And it somehow sets me thinking that her heart is full of guile
When a woman looks up at me with a made to order smile.

Now, all maidens, young and aged, hear the lesson I would teach—
Ye who meet us in the ballroom, ye who meet us at the beach—

Pray consent to try and charm us by some other sort
of wile
And relieve us from the burden of that made to order
smile.

Growing Gray.

Hello, ole man, you're a gittin' gray,
An' it beats ole Ned to see the way
At the crow's feet 's a-getherin' aroun' yore eyes ;
Tho' it oughtn't to cause me no su'prise,
Fur there's many a sun 'at you've seen rise
An' many a one you've seen go down
Since yore step was light an' yore hair wa- brown,
An' storms an' snows have had their way—
Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin' gray

Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin' gray,
An' the youthful pranks at you ust to play
Are dreams of a far past long ago
That lie in a heart where the fires burn low—
That has lost the flame tho' it kept the glow.
An' spite of drivin' snow an' storm,
Beats bravely on forever warm.
December holds the place of May—
Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin' gray.

Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin' gray—
Who cares what the carpin' youngsters say ?

For, after all, when the tale is told,
Love proves if a man be young or old !
Age cannot make the heart grow cold
When it does the will of an honest mind ;
When it beats with love for all mankind ;
An' the night but leads to a fairer day—
Hello, ole man, you're a-gittin' gray !

Signs of the Times.

Air a gittin' cool an' coolah,
Frost a comin' in the night,
Hicka' nuts an' wa'nuts fallin',
Possum keepin' out o' sight.
Tu'key struttin' in the ba'nya'd
Nary step so proud ez his ;
Keep on struttin', Mistah Tu'key,
Yo' do' know whut time it is.

Cidah press commence a squeakin'
Eatin' apples sto'ed away,
Chillin' swa'min' 'roun' lak ho'nets,
Huntin' aigs ermung de hay.
Mistah Tu'key keep on gobblin'
At the geese a flyin' souf,
Umph dat bird do' know what's comin'
Ef he did he'd shet his mouf.

Pumpkin gittin' good an yallah
 Make me open up my eyes ;
Seems lak its a lookin' at me
 Jes' a la'in dah sayin' "pies."
Tu'key gobbler gwine 'roun' blowin',
 Gwine 'roun' gibbin' his sass an' slack;
Keep on talkin' Mistah Tu'key,
 You ain't seed no almanac.

Fa'mer walkin' th'oo de ba'nya'd
 Seein how things is comin' on,
Sees ef all de fowls is fatt'nin'—
 Good times comin' sho's you bo'n.
Heahs dat tu'key gobbler braggin'
 Den his face break in a smile—
Nebbah min' you sassy rascal,
 He's gwine nab you after while.

Choppin' suet in de kitchen,
 Stonin' raisins in de hall,
Beef a cookin' fu' de mince meat,
 Spices groun'—I smell 'em all.
Look heah, Tu'key, stop dat gobblin',
 You ain' larned de sense ob feah,
You ol' fool yo' naik's in dangah,
 Do' you know Thanksgibbin's heah ?

The Delinquent.

Goo'by, Jinks, I got to hump,
Got to mek dis pony jump ;
See dat sun a-goin' down
'N' me a foolin' hyeah in town !
Git up, Suke—go long.

Guess Mirandy 'll think I'se tight,
Me not home an' comin' on night.
What's dat stan'in' by de fence ?
Pshaw ! why don't I lu'n some sense ?
Git up, Suke—go long.

Guess I spent down dar at Jinks's
Mos' a dollah fur de drinks.
Bless yo'r soul, you see dat star ?
Lawd, but won't Mirandy rar ?
Git up, Suke—go long.

Went dis mawnin', hyeah it's night,
Dar's de cabin dar in sight.
Who's dat stan'in' in de do' ?
Dat must be Mirandy, sho',
Git up, Suke—go long.

Got de close-stick in huh^{han}han',
Dat look funny, goodness lan',

Sakes alibe, but she look glum !

Hyeah, Mirandy, hyeah I come !

Git up, Suke—go long.

Ef 't hadn't a be'n fur you, you slow ole fool, I'd
a' be'n home long fo' now.

Deacon Jones' Grievance.

I've been watchin' of 'em, parson,

An' I'm sorry fur to say

'At my mind is not contented

With the loose an' keerless way

'At the young folks treat the music ;

'Tain't the proper sort o' choir,

Then I don't believe in Christuns

A-singin' hymns for hire.

But I never would 'a' murmured

An' the matter might 'a' gone

Ef it wasn't fur the antics

'At I've seen 'em kerry on ;

So I thought it was my dooty

Fur to come to you an' ask

Ef you wouldn't sort o' gently

Take them singin' folks to task.

Fust, the music they've be'n singin'

Will disgrace us very soon,

It's a cross between a opry

An' a ol' cotillion tune.

With its dashes an' its quavers
An' its hifalutin style—
Why, it sets my head to swimmin'
When I'm comin' down the aisle.

Now it might be almost decent
Ef it wasn't fur the way
'At they git up there an' sing it,
Hey dum diddle loud and gay.
Why, it shames the name o' sacred
In its brazen worldliness,
An' they've even got "Ol' Hundred"
In a bold, new-fangled dress.

You'll excuse me, Mr. Parson,
Ef I seem a little sore ;
But I've sung the songs of Isr'el
For three-score years an' more,
An' it sort o' hurts my feelin's
Fur to see 'em put away
Fur these harum-scarum ditties
'At is capturin' the day.

There's anuther little happ'nin'
'At I'll mention while I'm here,
Jes' to show 'at my objections
All is offered sound and clear.
It was one day they was singin'
An' was doin' well enough—
Singin' good as people could sing
Sich an awful mess o' stuff—

When the choir give a holler,
An' the organ give a groan,
An' they left one weak-voiced feller
A-singin' there alone !
But he stuck right to the music,
Tho' 'twas tryin' as could be ;
An' when I tried to help him,
Why, the hull church scowled at me.

You say that's so-low singin',
Well I pray the Lord that I
Growed up when folks was willin'
To sing their hymns so high.
Why, we never had sich doin's
In the good ol' Bethel days,
When the folks was all contented
With the simple songs of praise.

Now I may have spoke too open,
But 'twas too hard to keep still,
An' I hope you'll tell the singers
'At I bear 'em no ill-will.
'At they all may git to glory
Is my wish an' my desire,
But they'll need some extry trainin'
'Fore they jine the heavenly choir.

The Vilettante : A Modern Type.

He scribbles some in prose and verse,
And now and then he prints it ;
He paints a little—gathers some
Of Nature's gold and mints it.

He plays a little, sings a song,
Acts tragic roles, or funny ;
He does, because his love is strong,
But not, oh, not for money !

He studies almost everything
From social art to science ;
A thirsty mind, a flowing spring,
Demand and swift compliance.

He looms above the sordid crowd—
At least through friendly lenses ;
While his mamma looks pleased and proud,
And kindly pays expenses.

The Rivals.

'Twas three an' thirty year ago
When I wuz ruther young, you know,
I hed my last an' only fight
About a gal one summer night.
'Twas me an' Zekel Johnson ; Zeke
'N me 'd be'n spattin' 'bout a week ;

Each on us tryin' his best to show
That he was Liza Joneses beau.
We couldn't neither prove the thing,
Fur she wuz fur too sharp to fling
One over fur the other one
An' by so doin' stop the fun.
Thet we chaps didn't hev the sense
To see she got at our expense,
But that's the way a feller does,
Fur boys is fools an' allus wuz.
An' when they's females in the game
I reckon men's about the same.
Well, Zeke an' me went on that way
An' fussed an' quarrelled day by day ;
While Liza, mindin' not the fuss,
Jes' kep' a-goin' with both on us,
Tell we pore chaps, that's Zeke an' me,
Wuz jes' plum mad with jealousy.
Well, fur a time we kep' our places,
An' only showed by frownin' faces
An' looks 'at well our meanin' boded
How full o' fight we both was loaded.
At last it come, the thing broke out,
An' this is how it come about.
One night ('twas fair, you'll all agree),
I got Eliza's company,
An' leavin' Zekel in the lurch,
Went trottin' off with her to church.
An' jes' as we hed took our seat
(Eliza lookin' fair an' sweet),

Why, I jest couldn't help but grin
When Zekel come a-bouncin' in
As furious as the law allows.
He'd jest be'n up to Liza's house,
To find her gone, then come to church
To have this end put to his search.
I guess I laffed that meetin' thro'
An' not a mortal word I knew
Of what the preacher preached or read
Er what the choir sung er said.
Fur every time I'd turn my head
I couldn't skeercely help but see
'At Zekel had his eye on me.
An' he 'ud sort o' turn an' twist
An' grind his teeth an' shake his fist.
I laughed, fur la ! the hull church seen us,
An' knowed that suthin' was between us.
Well, meetin' out, we started hum.
I sorter feelin' what would come.
We'd jest got out, when up stepped Zeke,
An' said, "Scuse me, I'd like to speak
To you a minute." "Cert," says I—
A-nudgin' Liza on the sly
An' laughin' in my sleeve with glee,
I asked her, please, to pardon me.
We walked away a step er two,
Jest to git out o' Liza's view,
An' then Zeke said, "I want to know
Ef you think you're Eliza's beau,
An' 'at I'm goin' to let her go

Hum with sich a chap as you?"
An' I said bold, " You bet I do."
Then Zekel, sneerin', said 'at he
Didn't want to hender me.
But then he 'lowed the gal wuz his
An' 'at he guessed he knowed his biz,
An' wasn't feared o' all my kin
With all my friends an' chums throwed in.
Some other things he mentioned there
That no born man could no ways bear
Er think o' ca'mly tryin' to stan'
Ef Zeke hed be'n the bigges' man
In town, an' not the leanest runt
'At time an' labor ever stunt.
An' so I let my fist go "bim,"
I thought I'd mos' nigh finished him.
But Zekel didn't take it so.
He jest ducked down an' dodged my blow
An' then come back at me so hard,
I guess I must 'a' hurt the yard,
Er spile't the grass plot where I fell.
An' sakes alive it hurt me ; well
It wouldn't be'n so bad, you see,
But he jest kep' a-hittin' me.
An' I hit back an' kicked an' pawed,
But 't seemed 'twas mostly air I clawed,
While Zekel used his science well
A-makin' every motion tell.
He punched an' hit, why, goodness lands,
Seemed like he had a dozen hands.

Well, afterwhile they stopped the fuss,
An' someone kindly parted us.
All beat an' cuffed an' clawed an' scratched,
An' needin' both our faces patched,
Each started home a different way ;
An' what o' Lizy, do you say,
Why, Liza—little humbug—dern her,
Why, she'd gone home with Hiram Turner.

When Malindy Sings.

G'way an' quit dat noise, Miss Lucy—
Put dat music book away ;
What's de use to keep on tryin' ?
Ef you practice twell you're gray,
You cain't sta't no notes a-flyin'
Like de ones dat rants and rings
F'om de kitchen to de big woods
When Melindy sings.

You ain't got de nachel o'gans
Fu' to make de soun' come right,
You ain't got de tu'ns an' twistin's
Fu' to make it sweet an' light.
Tell you one thing now, Miss Lucy,
An' I'm tellin' you fu' true,
When hit comes to raal right singin',
'Tain't no easy thing to do.

Easy 'nough fu' folks to hollah,
Lookin' at de lines an' dots,
When dey ain't no one kin sence it.
An' de chune comes in in spots ;
But fu' real melojous music,
Dat jes' strikes yo' hawt and clings,
Jes' you stan' an' listen wif me,
When Malindy sings.

Ain't you nevah heerd Malindy ?
Blessed soul, take up de cross !
Look heah, ain't you jokin', honey ?
Well, you don't know what you los'
Y'ought to heah dat gal a-wa'blin',
Robins, la'ks an' all dem things,
Heish dey moufs an' hides dey faces
When Malindy sings.

Fiddlin' man, jes' stop his fiddlin',
Lay his fiddle on de she'f ;
Mockin'-bird quit tryin' to whistle,
'Cause he jes' so shamed hisse'f.
Folks a-playin' on de banjo,
Draps dey fingahs on de strings—
Bless yo' soul—fu'gits to move 'em.
When Malindy sings.

She jes' spreads huh mouf and hollahs.
" Come to Jesus," twell you heah
Sinnahs' tremblin' steps and voices,
Timid-like a-drawin' neah ;

Den she tu'ns to "Rock of Ages,"
 Simply to de cross she clings,
 An' you fin' yo' teahs a drappin',
 When Malindy sings.

Who dat says dat humble praises
 Wif de Master nevah counts ?
 Heish yo' mouf, I heah dat music,
 Ez hit rises up an' mounts—
 Floatin' by de hills an' valleys,
 Way above dis buryin' sod,
 Ez hit makes its way in glory
 To de very gates of God !

Oh, hits sweetah dan de music
 Of an edicated band ;
 And hits dearah dan de battle's
 Song o' triumph in de lan'
 It seems holier dan evenin'
 When de solemn chu'ch bell rings,
 Ez I sit an' ca'mly listen
 While Malindy sings.

Towsah, stop dat ba'kin' heah me !
 Mandy, make dat chile keep still ;
 Don't you heah de echoes callin'
 F'om de valley to de hill.
 Let me listen, I can heah it,
 Th'oo de bresh of angel's wings,
 Sof' an' sweet, " Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,"
 Ez Malindy sings.

An Easy-Goin' Feller.

Ther' ain't no use in all this strife,
An' hurryin', pell-mell, right thro' life.
I don't believe in goin' too fast
To see what kind o' road you've passed.
It ain't no mortal kind o' good
'N' I wouldn't hurry ef I could.
I like to jest go joggin' 'long,
To limber up my soul with song ;
To stop awhile 'n' chat the men,
'N' drink some cider now an' then.

Do' want no boss a standin' by
To see me work ; I allus try
To do my dooty right straight up,
An' earn what fills my plate an' cup.
An' ez fur boss, I'll be my own,
I like to jest be let alone,
To plow my strip an' tend my bees.
An' do jest like I doggoned please.
My head's all right, an' my heart's meller,
But I'm a easy-goin' feller.

Speaking o' Christmus.

Breezes blowin' middlin' brisk,
Snow-flakes thro' the air a-whisk,
Fallin' kind o' soft an' light,
Not enough to make things white,

But jest sorter siftin' down
So's to cover up the brown
Of the dark world's rugged ways
'N make things look like holidays.
Not smoothed over, but jest specked,
Sorter strainin' for effect,
An' not quite a-gittin' through
What it started in to do.
Mercy sakes ! it does seem queer
Christmas day is most nigh here.
Somehow it don't seem to me
Christmas like it ust to be.
Christmas with its ice an' snow,
Christmas of the long ago.
You could feel its stir an' hum
Weeks an' weeks before it come ;
Somethin' in the atmosphere
Told you when the day was near,
Didn't need no almanacs ;
That was one o' Nature's fac's.
Every cottage decked out gay—
Cedar wreaths an' holly spray—
An' the stores, how they were drest,
Tinsel till you couldn't rest ;
Every winder fixed up pat,
Candy canes, an' things like that :
Noah's arks, an' guns, an' dolls,
An' all kinds o' fol-de-rols.
Then with frosty bells a-chime,
Slidin' down the hills o' time,

Right amidst the fun an' din
Christmas comes a-bustlin' in,
Raised his cheery voice to call
Out a welcome to us all.
Hale and hearty, strong an' bluff.
That was Christmas, sure enough.
Snow knee deep an' coastin' fine.
Frozen mill-ponds all ashine,
Seemin' jest to lay in wait,
Beggin' you to come an' skate.
An' you'd git your gal an' go
Stumpin' cheerily thro' the snow,
Feelin' pleased an' skeert an' warm
'Cause she's got a-holt yore arm.
An' when Christmas come, why, we
Spent the whole glad day in glee.
Havin' fun an' feastin' high
An' some courtin' on the sly
Burstin' in some neighbor's door
An' then suddenly, before
He could give his voice a lift,
Yellin' at him, "Chrismus gift."
Now sich things are never heard,
"Merry Chris'mus" is the word.
But it's only change o' name
An' means givin' jest the same.
There's too many new-styled ways
Now about the holidays.
I'd jest like once more to see
Christmas like she ust to be!

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